

EMPOWERMENT: EXPLORING THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF
RENTERS' RIGHTS GROUP MEMBERS

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ABSTRACT

Although the term empowerment is frequently and broadly used across disciplines, the meaning of the term is often ambiguous. The purpose of this qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological study was to explore the lived experience of individual members of Renters' Rights Group (RRG), a community development group focused on promoting safe and affordable housing, thereby creating a better understanding of the phenomenon of empowerment. The seven study participants, four males and three females, five of whom were Aboriginal, had been active members of RRG for two years or more. The theoretical framework for this study was Parse's Theory of Human Becoming. Four core concepts were identified as contributing to participants' sense of empowerment: connecting, struggling, contributing, and changing. The findings from this study can be used by nurses and other professionals who work with marginalized individuals or groups. Incorporation of Parse's Human Becoming Theory into practice, education, and research, may facilitate the reflection of caring upon which nursing is founded.

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To my five children, gifts of the God upon whom I rely, I offer my humblest thanks and appreciation, since they have been both anchor and support to me, enabling me to become the nurse that I am today. Thank you Michael, Abe, John, Christina, and James.

DEDICATION

To all my fellow travellers:

I honour and admire you as you dare to journey onwards,
pushing into the wind. This poem, *Whispering Night Winds*, I dedicate to you.

The night winds are whispering of things yet to be

The scent of possibilities permeates the air

Stirring the slumbering hearts of weary travellers

As they journey against the wind.

The horizon shimmers and hope rises anew

Yesterday's glory is remembered

Today's possibilities become visible

Fears and doubts are cast aside

Risks are taken, opportunities realized

Creating new possibilities and realities

As dreams awaken and give birth to visions

Courageously, pushing against the wind

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Phenomenon of Interest at Renters' Rights Group

It was evident from my first visit in September, 2000, with Renters' Rights Group (RRG) members in their Saskatoon office within the clinic that provides both funding and space for the organization, that there was something dynamic about these people, but I could not readily identify the phenomenon. I asked myself, "Was this phenomenon "empowerment"? I assumed empowerment to mean that power was being taken and mobilized and this process seemed evident at RRG meetings and activities that I attended. However, I felt that closer scrutiny was required in order to investigate what was happening in this group.

During the course of my graduate practicum, I realized that one of the goals of the partnership between the clinic (Westside Community Clinic) and RRG was to foster personal and group empowerment while building community. I became aware of RRG's coalitions and political actions, but had not focused on the members' individual experiences, a potential source of rich data on empowerment. During the course of my graduate program, I realized that Parse's Human Becoming Theory (HBT) and methodology could be useful for exploring the lived experience of RRG members. Parse's HBT and her research methodology are broad and creative in both scope and range, facilitating the story telling process while valuing the narrator, thus making the methodology particularly relevant for this study.

Personal Philosophy and Perspective

Having been born and raised by Hungarian immigrant parents who were of low socioeconomic status, I was marginalized from birth. With my six siblings, I was ostracized by my primary school peers as a result of my Hungarian accent, shabby clothing, and lack of confidence. I grew up feeling ashamed of my family and ashamed of myself. Somehow, I never seemed to fit in with the mainstream of society. I was never popular at school or in my community. My family's isolation may have been affected by my mother's poor health. My mother had multiple sclerosis and died during my teens, and I was placed in a foster home where I was abused. Throughout my childhood, it seemed that my mother was either going into or returning from rehabilitation hospitals.

At eighteen, I married an alcoholic, and after years of domestic violence, I left, a single mother, raising five children with no support. It did not take long to realize that higher education was needed. In a series of steps, from education and employment as a Licensed Practical Nurse, then as a Registered Nurse, I studied and worked my way into the graduate program at the University of Saskatchewan.

While my journey of empowerment has been long and tortuous, it has afforded some remarkable insights and lessons. I saw many gaps in the existing social fabric of life, where the poor and uneducated lack the necessary knowledge, skills, confidence, awareness, energy, and abilities to take advantage of existing opportunities, while those of higher socioeconomic status seem to gain a disproportionate share of benefits. With five children, I had little energy or confidence to cross the many barriers, but necessity motivated me to seek a vocation that would cover my day-care expenses and give my

family some of the benefits we were lacking. Motherhood and its requirements propelled me past a myriad of barriers, such as limited education, job skills, training, social status, gender limitations, and day-care concerns, as I sought to gain for my children what I had never received myself.

From my own journey of empowerment, I realized that support, encouragement, pressure, and opportunities made the travelling much easier. There were times when the going was so rough that I wanted to give up, but motherhood again fortified me enough so I could persist. My journey is not yet over.

Since my own background is in many ways similar to that of participants in the study, it was important for me to try to realize and put aside my preconceptions and personal experiences as best as I could and to immerse myself in the transcripts without letting those experiences have a significant influence on my interpretation of the research data. However, marginalized people may have perceived me more approachable since they could identify with me in relation to my own previously disclosed background, which bears many commonalties with those of disadvantaged people.

Renters' Rights Group: An Overview

In 1994, staff in an inner city community clinic realized that many of the health problems in the neighbourhood were the result of poor housing. In 1995, RRG was officially formed in response to community meetings at which issues of broken windows, poor insulation, and other housing problems were raised. The community clinic supported the organization, whose members are mainly Aboriginal, low income, single mothers. The main purpose of RRG is "to provide information to landlords and

tenants about their rights and responsibilities so that we can all come together to work co-operatively on building a safe and healthy community" (Renters' Rights Group, 1998).

RRG has a listed membership of approximately 100 people, of whom approximately 10 to 15 attend the monthly meetings and periodic social activities. Members are expected to attend regular monthly meetings and to be involved in all aspects of the organization, including office work, advocating at hearings, and related activities. Transportation, childcare, and snacks are provided free of charge and are available to those attending the meetings, since such costs would otherwise be a barrier to participation and attendance. Although a modest honorarium of \$15 is paid to those who work in the office during the week, most of the work and activities are provided by volunteers. The majority of funding is provided by the affiliated clinic, which obtains its operating revenues largely from grants. Additionally, RRG periodically engages in activities, such as hot dog sales and barbecues, to generate further income.

Most members live in the inner city of Saskatoon in the districts of Caswell Hill, Pleasant Hill, Riversdale, Westmount, and King George. According to the City of Saskatoon Planning and Building Department data (1998), the inner city has a large number of single parent families, families below the poverty line, parents with less than a Grade nine education, and people whose first language is not English. Although the city of Saskatoon has an Aboriginal population of 7.5%, the inner city has a higher proportion of Aboriginal people, ranging from 12.2% in Caswell Hill to 30.7% in Pleasant Hill. Approximately 50% of inner city residents are aged 20 or younger (City of Saskatoon Planning and Building Department, 1998). Average rents for two and three

bedroom apartments have increased 18% and 9% from 1995 to 1998, but there has been no corresponding increase in shelter allowance provided by social assistance. More than half of the families on assistance are using \$30 to \$150 per month from their food allowance toward rent (CMHC Report, 1998). Average family income is under \$20,000 per year. Crime, vandalism, transience, child prostitution, alcoholism, drug abuse, and children not attending school are common challenges for inner city residents (Kampman, 2001; Willson, 1995).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experience of members of Renters' Rights Group (RRG), a grassroots organization of low income Saskatoon residents from the inner city, engaged in community building as they address housing concerns. It was necessary to hear the voices and perspectives of the participants in order to learn more about the phenomenon of empowerment.

Research Questions

The research questions were:

- 1) What is the structure of the lived experience of individuals in the context of their membership in Renters' Rights Group?
- 2) What is the relationship between the structure of their lived experience and the phenomenon of empowerment?

Significance of the Study

There are many people in Canada who, as a result of socioeconomic status, race, culture, gender, education, and single parent status, as well as other factors, are marginalized, or relegated to the fringes and outer edges of society. Consequently,

marginalized people may be deprived of necessary elements and resources, such as higher education, social status, income above poverty level, employment, adequate housing, and safe environments. RRG, a group of volunteer citizens presently united in addressing tenants' rights issues, has been relatively successful in many aspects of community development, including community organization, coalition and advocacy, and political action. According to unpublished reports (Kampman, 2001; Willson, 1996), the process of community development has fostered opportunities for participants to experience empowerment. Wallerstein (1992, p. 197) indicates that "powerlessness, or lack of control over destiny, emerges as a broad-based risk factor for disease. Empowerment . . . can also be demonstrated as an important promoter of health." Wallerstein and Bernstein (1994) recommend that efforts at community empowerment be critically assessed to ensure that conditions for professionals and communities are conducive to engaging in empowering practice together.

Community development (Waas, 2000), which includes the themes of collectivity and empowerment, is commonly practised by primary health care providers to help bridge perceived and real gaps between services and identified needs. Nurses may be directly involved with community health and/or in collaboration with community groups and public health agencies and efforts. Since many Canadians are active members of community groups, exploration of the core concepts of empowerment in relation to a community organization may provide insight and understanding concerning participants' perceptions of group involvement. Hence, the study of marginalized members of society may contribute to nursing science's understanding of principles and practises that are useful in fostering empowerment.

Understanding principles and strategies useful for working with marginalized members of society may facilitate more effective health care delivery and promote greater acceptability of services among this population. By understanding how empowerment is fostered or hindered through the process of participation and membership in a community organization such as RRG, health professionals can become more effective in understanding and applying concepts relating to fostering empowerment.

This study was conducted using Parse's research methodology, a distinct method that has evolved from the Human Becoming Theory of Nursing (Parse, 1981, 1992, 1998). In keeping with Parse's theory, the goal of nursing is to promote quality of life from the participant's perspective, and the goals of nursing research are "to uncover the structure of lived experiences" (Parse, 1992, p. 41) and thus to advance nursing science. This research contributes to nursing theory development through using a research methodology specifically designed for nursing. This research is a respectful and culturally sensitive way of viewing people as "subjects" who order their universe rather than as "objects", to be acted on, studied and otherwise scrutinized (Freire, 1974).

Assumptions

I made a number of assumptions prior to beginning the present study. I assumed that the term empowerment meant that power was being taken and mobilized. I believed that empowerment was a critical component of health. I assumed that RRG members would provide valued and truthful responses based on our pre-existing relationship, which was formed during the course of my practicum. I assumed that RRG members who had some experience and were still involved with the group were important to the study. I believed that Parse's HBT was relevant for me and for working with a

marginalized group. I also assumed that Parse's research methodology would be relevant and efficacious to examine the lived experience of these people and to analyze the resultant information. I believed that my own personal experience and attributes would be helpful in eliciting rich data in the engagements.

Outline of the Study

Following the introductory sections of Chapter One, Chapter Two describes Parse's HBT and related methodology, followed by specific details related to the methodology used in this study, ethical considerations, rigor and credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. The chapter closes with delimitations of this study. Chapter Three presents the findings from this research and includes character sketches of the seven participants. The extraction-synthesis process reveals essences, propositions, core concepts, the structure of the lived experience, and heuristic interpretation. In Chapter Four, the findings are discussed as related to relevant literature. Chapter Five concerns conclusions, implications, and reflections relating to this study.

Key Definitions

changing	"passing from one form, phase, place, or state to another" (New Webster's Dictionary and Thesaurus of the English Language [NWDT] 1992, p. 163).
coconstitution	"coparticipation in creating meaning in situations" (Parse, 1998, p. 97).
cocreate	coconstitute (Parse, 1998, p. 97).
coexistence	"living with predecessors, contemporaries, and successors all at once" (Parse, 1998, p. 97).

community relationship"	"body of people living near one another and in social (NWDT, 1992, p. 198)
community development	"a process of 'working with people as they define their own goals, mobilize resources, and develop action plans for addressing problems they collectively have identified'" Minkler, 1991, [as cited by Waas, 2000, p. 158].
connecting	"a linking" or a "joining" (NWDT, 1992, p. 207).
connecting-separating	"being with and apart from others, ideas, objects, and situations all-at-once" (Parse, 1998, p. 97).
contributing	includes helping, sharing, and giving, "to help to bring something about" (NWDT, 1992, p. 212).
cotranscending	"moving with" (Parse, 1998, p. 97).
dialogical engagement	"a discussion between the researcher and the participant," involves the use of true presence, and is not an interview (Parse, 1999, p. 6)
empower	"to enable" (NWDT, 1992, p. 309).
empowerment	"the capacity to define, analyze, and act upon problems in one's life and living condition" (Labonte, n.d., p. 5). "The only empowerment of any importance is the power seized by individuals or groups" (Labonte, 1994, p. 256).
enable	"to make it possible for or to allow [a person or thing] to do something" (NWDT, p. 309).
enabling-limiting	"living the opportunities-restrictions present in all choosings at once" (Parse, 1998, p. 97).
energy	stipulated definition, "power" (based on paper by Todaro-Franceschi, 2001).
essence	"the most significant part of a thing's nature" (NWDT, p. 322).
health	"Health occurs as the human being 'structures meaning in situations'" and "It is a process of being and becoming" [Parse] (as cited in Pickrell et al., 1998, p. 468). "Unitary man's health is a synthesis of values, a way of living" (Parse, 1981, p. 39).

health promotion	"the process of enabling people to increase control over, and to improve, their health" (Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion, 1986)
imaging	"reflective-prereflective coming to know the explicit-tacit all-at-once" (Parse, 1998, p. 97).
lived experience	the focus of phenomenological inquiry and "the essence of this phenomenon as experienced by these people" (Polit & Hungler, 1999, p. 246). an individual's perspective and description of their experience (Parse, 1998).
man-living-health	"The meaning unfolding from this hyphenated structure of man and health points to man's health as ongoing participation with the world" (Parse, 1981, p. 39).
marginalize	"to cause to live on the margins of society by excluding from participation in any group effort" (NWDT, p. 610).
meaning	stipulated definition, "ascribed value"
oppression	caused to feel mentally, or spiritually burdened, or "physically as though suffering" (NWDT, p. 704).
originating	"inventing new ways of conforming-not conforming in the certainty-uncertainty of living" (Parse, 1998, p. 98).
paradox	"unity of apparent opposites; two dimensions of one rhythm" Parse, 1998, p. 98).
paradoxical	"an apparent contradiction" (Parse, 1998, p. 98).
patterns of relating	"paradoxical ways of becoming" (Parse, 1998, p. 98).
phenomenon	"the abstract entity or concept under investigation in a study, most often used by qualitative researchers in lieu of the term 'variable'" (Polit & Hungler, 1999, p. 710).
phenomenology	"the study of phenomena as they appear" (Parse, 1998, p. 98).
possibles	"the imaginables" (Parse, 1998, p. 98).

power	"an ability or faculty", "controlling influence", "control" (NWDT, 1992, p. 787).
powering	"the pushing-resisting process of affirming-not-affirming being in light of nonbeing" (Parse, 1998, p. 98).
powerlessness	"unable" or "without power" (NWDT, 1992, p. 787).
process	"a series of acts or changes, proceeding from one to the next" or "a moving forward, esp. as part of a progression or development" (NWPD, 1992, p.797).
proposition	"an expression or statement of which the subject can be affirmed or denied", "the point to be discussed in formal disputation, [argument] usually framed in a single sentence" (NWDT, 1992, p. 801).
rhythmical	"cadent" (Parse, 1998, p. 98).
structure	"the way in which constituent parts are fitted or joined together, or arranged to give something its peculiar nature or character" (NWDT, 1992, p. 983).
struggling	"to make one's way with difficulty" (NWDT, 1992, p. 983).
structure of lived experience	"structure of lived experience"-answers the research question concerning the phenomenon under study. This is the central meaning attributed to the phenomenon by the participants (Parse, 1999, p. 7).
transcending	"moving with; exceeding" (Parse, 1998, p. 99).
transforming	"shifting the view of the familiar-unfamiliar; the changing of change in coconstituting anew in a deliberate way" (Parse, 1998, p. 99).
true presence	"genuine, nonmechanical, nonroutinized attentiveness to the other(s)" (Parse, 1998, p. 99).
unitary	"different from the sum of parts" (Parse, 1998, p. 99).
value	"the measure of how strongly something is desired" (NWDT, 1992, p. 1087).

valuing	"confirming-not confirming cherished beliefs in light of a personal worldview" (Parse, 1998, p. 99).
vision	"imaginative foresight" (NWDT, 1992, p. 1100).

CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

Parse's Human Becoming Theory of Nursing (HBT) and Associated Methodology

The method of research used in this study was Parse's (1987, 1992, 1995) phenomenological hermeneutic method, which she designed to be consistent and congruent with the philosophy and principles of the Human Becoming Theory of Nursing (Parse, 1981, 1992).

Parse's Human Becoming Theory of Nursing

The Human Becoming Theory of Nursing (HBT) is grounded in the human sciences and provides a framework of interconnected concepts that portray the unitary, or "different from the sum of parts" (Parse, 1998, p. 7) human-universe mutual process. According to Parse (1981, p. 30), "Becoming is man's continuous growing through energy exchange with the environment toward the not-yet that is more diverse and more complex." HBT is a departure from the medical view of a human as an amalgam of bio-psycho-socio-spiritual parts with its emphasis on diagnosis, treatment, and disease prevention. HBT is grounded in the concept that humans are unitary and are to be viewed holistically, with an emphasis on maximum well-being and quality of life. Vital concepts of HBT include: human freedom to select alternative ways of becoming; interactive processes between humans and the universe; humans are unitary; the "coconstitution" of health; and the meaning the human gives to being and becoming (Parse, 1981, 1992). In HBT, humans have an impact on and are impacted by the universe, including the environment within which they live. The assumptions of HBT

are a potpourri of Martha Rogers' principles, concepts and existential-phenomenological thought (as cited by Parse, 1998), primarily from Heidegger, Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty. By considering Rogers' grand theory with its human science school of thought, which "posits the unitary human as an indivisible energy field" (Parse, 1998, p.12), Parse developed a theory that is relevant and applicable to nursing, since the theory is caring, respectful, and non-judgemental in its conception and application, thereby promoting cultural safety.

Parse's HBT differs from Rogers' theory in that Parse relies on the use of "true presence" to "bear witness" through dialogical engagement while Rogers utilizes mutual patterning and active processes to foster individual changes. Quantitative studies using developed instruments are used by Rogers for facilitating change. Parse relies on qualitative studies involving exploratory descriptions to reveal phenomena. Empowerment and personal power are inconsistent with Rogers' science since "Empowerment implies that a benevolent patriarchal protector . . . will empower" (Madrid, 1997, p. 37). Rogers' power theory assumes that clients have power that they can optimize through the use of various power enhancing strategies and techniques such as mutual patterning, health patterning, and guided imagery.

In contrast to Rogers' theory and beliefs, Parse does not attempt to guide or influence persons. Central to HBT is the importance placed on the unique perspectives and experiences of clients. The central thesis of HBT is that humans freely choose ways of becoming as they interact with the universe, creating together, in conjunction with the universe with which they interact, thereby impacting their lives and health as they

pursue their hopes and dreams. Parse's HBT includes several foundational assumptions that are further synthesized and coalesced into three major formulations (Parse, 1998):

1. Human becoming is freely choosing personal meaning in the intersubjective process of relating value priorities.
2. Human becoming is cocreating rhythmical patterns of relating in open interchange with the universe.
3. Human becoming is cotranscending multidimensionally with the emerging possibles. (p. 29)

Since each of the above formulations is central to Parse's HBT, I will elaborate on the associated meanings as I understand them to be. In her first formulation, Parse says that humans are not static or unchanging, but are dynamic, charged with transformative energy that is directed toward generating a process of change or becoming, in the direction of their free choosing. Paradox is central to HBT since one choice may necessitate the rejection of another choice. Humans individually attribute meaning and value to their personal choices as they freely make their selections among available options, thereby establishing and revealing their patterns of relating and priorities within the context of continuous connection with time and the universe.

The second formulation postulates that humans, in rhythm with the universe, create ever-changing but individual patterns of relating that are manifested through speech, words, symbols, and other human expressions and mannerisms.

The third formulation means that humans freely choose to rise above their existing situations, taking risks, transcending the familiar and known, and moving into the realm of diverse possibilities. The many realms of the universe together create unique patterns of relating. Humans, in a mutual process with the universe, are always in the process of becoming, thus effecting constant change.

According to Parse (as cited by Pickrell et al., 1998, p. 467), nursing is a human science that "focuses on man as a living unity and man's qualitative participation with health experiences." Implicit in this concept is that living dynamic beings actively participate in and reflect on the health experience. According to Parse, the human is "more than and different from the sum of parts" (Parse, 1998, p. 11), and changes and evolves in synchrony with the environment. Environment, according to Parse, 1981 (as cited by Pickrell et al., 1998, p. 68), is "a pattern and organization" that is distinct from but inseparably linked to the human. Humans choose the meaning and values they attribute to situations they create.

From Martha Rogers' theory, HBT borrows the concept of the human as a unitary being, and from existential-phenomenological thought, the concept of choice as an action between man and his universe. The essence of HBT is that humans are creatures of choice, actively exercising that choice in creating their own situations, values, priorities, and directions in all aspects of life, including health. Human becoming, according to Parse (1998, p. 31), is "a construct involving quality of life and health as ongoing mutual participation with the universe." Humans are unfragmented unitary beings who "dynamically participate in the universe, creating their own realities and choosing their own destinies" (Parse, 1998, p. 40). Furthermore, Pickrell et al., 1998, describe Parse's theory as a human science in which individuals exercise choice as they, in conjunction with the universe, "participate in the cocreation of health" (p. 464).

Human Becoming Practice Methodology

When HBT is applied by a practising nurse, "The Human Becoming nurses' goal is to be truly present with people as they enhance their quality of life" (Parse, 1998, p.

69). According to Parse, quality of life can only be described by the person living the life, since it "is the incarnation of meanings in their seamless symphony of becoming" (Parse, 1998, p. 69). Nurses who ascribe to HBT do not seek to impose their view or perspective on the individual's view of what quality of life constitutes, but respect those views. Parse emphasizes the practice of "true presence" (Parse, 1998, p. 71), or "an intentional reflective love, an interpersonal art grounded in a strong knowledge base."

Three dimensions and processes are central to nursing practice: "illuminating meaning", "synchronizing rhythms", and "mobilizing transcendence" (Parse, 1998, pp. 69-70). "Illuminating meaning" refers to interpreting and explaining what is spoken or revealed during dialogical engagement, using both verbal and nonverbal expressions (Parse, 1998, p. 69). "Synchronizing rhythms" involves the nurse in attentively and non-judgementally listening and moving with the rhythm as experiences are described (p. 70). "Mobilizing transcendence" refers to the movement beyond the present in which hopes and dreams are illuminated (Parse, 1998, p. 70). There is a natural flow during the dialogical engagement where true presence is utilized as meanings are illuminated, rhythms synchronized, and transcendence mobilized. Parse's "Theory of Human Becoming: Video and Learning Guide" (International Consortium of Parse Scholars, n.d.) provides an introduction to the practice methodology of HBT and shows nurses demonstrating true presence in a variety of clinical situations.

Parse claims that "people may change health patterns in true presence with the nurse when they change their value priorities, since health is a personal commitment cocreated with others" (Parse, 1998, p. 74). Some techniques to facilitate this process include "creative imagining" (Parse, 1998, p. 74), which is used in imagining

possibilities inherent in living in a different way; "affirming personal becoming" (p. 74), which uncovers personal preferences and patterns thereby revealing value priorities; and "glimpsing the paradoxical" (p. 75), which identifies "the incongruence in a situation" and exposes conflict to facilitate changing of perspectives. These three techniques are useful in encouraging people to change health patterns. The nurse, in true presence, is not a guide, but rather "an attentive presence that calls others to shed light on the meaning moments of life, bearing witness to the choices in changing health patterns" (Parse, 1998, p. 75). Parse indicates that people choose their own rhythmical patterns of relating as they reach for their hopes and dreams.

Parse's Research Methodology

The purpose of Parse's research methodology is to "uncover the structure of lived experiences with persons or groups who can articulate the meaning of an experience" (Parse, 1992, p. 41). Description of the meaning of the lived experience may be "... through words, symbols, music, metaphors, poetry, photographs, drawings, or movements" (Parse, 1998, p. 63). Phenomena such as loss, grieving, waiting, hope, and empowerment are examples of universal lived experiences and are therefore appropriate entities to study with this method of research (Parse, 1992). Discussions are generally audiotaped and/or videotaped, and the resultant dialogue is transcribed to typed format for subsequent data analysis (Burns & Grove, 2001).

The processes of Parse's research method occur simultaneously, in what Rogers, 1992 (as cited by Parse, 1998, p. 14) terms as "pandimensionality", or in a "non-linear domain without spatial or temporal attributes." According to Parse (1987), an adequate sample for this research method is two to ten participants. Following participant

selection, the processes of dialogical engagement, extraction-synthesis, and heuristic interpretation (Parse, 1987) take place. Each of these processes is essential to Parse's research method.

Dialogical engagement. According to Parse (1998, 2001), dialogical engagement is not an interview, but a discussion between the researcher and participant, with the researcher centred and in true presence with the participant and focused on the phenomenon under investigation. The researcher and respondent participate in an "unstructured discussion about a lived experience" (Burns & Grove, 2001, p. 607). The researcher engages in "true presence", defined as "an emptying of self" or a gentling down "through quiet contemplation" (Parse, 1998, pp. 69-75). The practice of "true presence" is "an intentional reflexive love, an interpersonal art grounded in a strong knowledge base" that enables the researcher to engage in being with the person (Parse, 1998, p. 71). "Face to face discussions", "silent immersion", and "lingering presence" are components of the practice of "true presence" (Fawcett, 2000, p. 574).

"Lingering presence" (Parse, 1998, p. 73) refers to the glimpses afforded the researcher as she recollects the dialogical engagement and perceived glimpses of that moment, which are inextricably absorbed into the researcher's life. "Face-to-face discussions" (Parse, 1998, p. 72) refer to the dialogue engaged in by the researcher and person or group, and may include interpretations of such expressions as art, music, drama, stories, and poetry, exclusive of verbal expressions. The essential element of face-to-face discussions is that the processes be centred on the participant or group being studied. "Silent immersion is a process of the quiet that does not refrain from sending messages" (Parse, 1998, p. 73). In silent immersion, the researcher is in true

presence without words, embracing and honouring the person as a being who knows his or her own way. Parse describes this process as "just 'being with' through immediate engaging in the presence of another or through imagination with a grounding in the intention to bear witness to the other's becoming" (Parse, 1998, p. 73).

Engagement in "true presence" is a common aspect of HBT and is a vital part of Parse's research methodology and data collection. Opening the dialogue with a comment such as "Please tell me about your experience of . . ." (Parse, 1998, p. 64), the researcher then remains in true presence with the participant, listening and not interjecting questions, and using such prompts as, "Go on" or "Please tell me more." Although the researcher enters the dialogue having contemplated the meaning of the experience and centred herself to be in true presence with the participant, the process evolves in an original and unique manner as the researcher-participant discussion proceeds (Parse, 1987). These dialogues may be audiotaped or videotaped.

Extraction-synthesis. The process of extraction-synthesis involves "constructing a story of essential ideas about the phenomenon from each participant's dialogue, culling the essences . . . in the language of the participant, and conceptualizing these essences in the language of science to form a structure of the experience" (Parse, 2001, p. 170). Parse states that the structure of the lived experience is the answer to the research question.

To begin the extraction-synthesis process, the researcher ponders carefully the transcribed dialogical engagement while "dwelling with" the transcribed dialogues (Parse, 2001, p. 171) in true presence. After the centring process, where a quieting, gentling relaxed concentration is attained, the researcher is immersed in the experience

and "by inventing through abiding with logic, while adhering to the semantic consistency" (Parse, 2001, p. 171), undertakes to extract the meaning of the lived experience of the participants. There are a number of concurrent steps involved in this process: extracting and synthesizing essences (significant key ideas) in the participants' language; taking the central ideas from these essences and translating them into the researcher's more abstract language; combining the essences from the individual participants to formulate a proposition or non-directional statement in scientific language of core concepts, and finally, joining the core concepts to create the structure of the lived experience (Parse, 1987).

Heuristic interpretation. The process of heuristic interpretation occurs as the structure of the lived experience is blended with Human Becoming Theory (HBT) through structural integration and conceptual interpretation (Parse, 1987, 1992, 1998). Parse also uses the terms structural transposition and conceptual integration in reference to the processes of heuristic interpretation (Parse, 1998, p. 65). "Structural transposition is an expression of the structure at a higher level of abstraction" (Parse, 2001, p. 7). "Conceptual integration specifies this structure with the principles of human becoming and beyond to forge new ideas for further research and practice" (Parse, 2001, p. 7). Heuristic interpretation generates new ideas for further research and practice, resulting in a closer relationship between theory, practice, and research. Figure 2.1 identifies components of Parse's research methodology.

Table 2.1. Components of Parse's research methodology

Dialogical Engagement
Extraction-Synthesis
Participants' Essences
Researcher's Essences
Propositions from Participant's & Researcher's Essences
Core Concepts
Structure of Lived Experience
Heuristic Interpretation
Structural Integration of Concepts & Research Proposition
Conceptual Interpretation & Research Proposition

Methodology Used in this Study

Context

The setting for this qualitative study was a neighbourhood in the inner city of Saskatoon. The clinic that is RRG's parent organization, providing financial support and office space, is located in the downtown core. Five of the seven study participants lived in the inner city, while two members lived in an area on the west side of the city.

According to RRG bylaws," A member is someone who has been coming to meetings regularly and is onvolved [sic] in all aspects of this project such as, working in committees, in the office, advocating at hearings, supporting each other in the process and promoting the project by attending local community meetings and conferences."

(Renters Rights and Advocates Association, 2000, p. 1).

My initial introduction to RRG occurred in September of 2000, when I gained entry to the group during the course of my clinical practicum, which lasted until April

2001. In September of 2001, I spoke with individual RRG members concerning the upcoming research that I was planning to begin in 2002.

Participants

After approval by the Behavioural Ethics Committee of the University of Saskatchewan (December 2001, Appendix B), I attended a RRG general meeting and approached the executive of the group, requesting that they identify potential participants for the study and make the initial contact on my behalf. I asked them to identify and approach members who may have had either positive or negative experiences to help validate the findings (Burns & Grove, 2001). I attempted to include adult Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal participants, a mix of males and females, and participants with varying periods of involvement in RRG. Individuals who were able to understand, read, and speak English and who were willing to talk with the researcher were asked to participate.

I met briefly with the group of potential participants to discuss the proposed research and to determine their willingness and availability for the study. Not all of the prospective participants were willing to be involved in the research. One declined, despite numerous phone contacts, indicating that he was upset with RRG, while another possible candidate seemed reluctant to arrange an interview, indicating that he would be away indefinitely. The final number of participants was seven.

Consent

After explaining the study and related processes, the participants read (or I read to the participants) the consent form (Appendix C) and asked them to sign it and to complete a demographic questionnaire (Appendix D). In obtaining consent, I informed

the participants about the nature and methodology of the study and invited and answered their questions. They were assured that their participation would be kept confidential and that their names or personal identifying information would not appear on any written material generated from this research. The participants were informed that voluntary withdrawal from the study at any time during the course of the study was acceptable, thereby ensuring that participants voluntarily participated. The signed consent form served as evidence of the participants' willingness to be involved in the study.

The meetings with participants were set for mutually agreeable times, further ensuring their willing participation. Each time I spoke with the participants, they had opportunity to withdraw if they wished. The dialogical engagements were audiotaped and transcribed. Transcripts were provided to all participants, allowing for further responses, changes, and additions or deletions. Following review of transcripts by the participants, they signed a final consent form, releasing the transcripts, as read and altered, for the purpose of the study as outlined.

Dialogical Engagement

Having centred myself through a form of meditation where I retreated into the place of peacefulness within the core of my being, I entered into true presence with each study participant. Prior to the dialogical engagements, I had reviewed my notes regarding true presence, which I had written following numerous viewing of Parse's "Theory of Human Becoming: Video and Learning Guide" (International Consortium of Parse Scholars, n.d.). Although there were some difficulties in remaining in true presence because of extraneous noises and distractions, I was largely successful

throughout the process. I focused on the participants in an attentive and caring manner while they spoke of their experiences.

Prior to audiotaping, I discussed the purpose of the dialogical engagement, that is, an exploration of their experiences as members of RRG. Participants were free to discuss any life situation that was related to the lived experience of participating in RRG and I accepted the participants' accounts of their experiences as being true and genuine. I began each dialogical engagement by asking, "How did you get involved with RRG?" As the dialogue proceeded, if there were requests from the participant, or if there seemed to be a need, I would use one of the dialogical prompts (Appendix E). Although Parse recommends that questions not be interjected during the dialogical engagement, I utilized the dialogical questions and prompts to facilitate the engagement. Some of the dialogical prompts were specifically geared to identify changes consequent to membership in RRG. "How did you get involved with RRG?" "Were there personal changes that resulted from your membership with RRG?" "How has RRG affected your family and community?" (Appendix E). In order to gain clarity from the participants and to focus on their experiences, I used prompts, such as "Go on" or "Can you tell me more about that?" I also inserted a question at the end, "What do you see for the future of RRG?" These questions were designed to elicit descriptions of changes and of the experience of being a member of RRG.

After each meeting with a participant, I reviewed the dialogical engagement, to ensure that the audiotaped dialogue was audible and to familiarize myself with the data, reinforcing details of the engagement and experience while it was still fresh in my mind. As I listened to the audiotapes, read my notes, and remembered the dialogue, I centred

myself to be in true presence by deliberately entering the peaceful place in the core of my being, a place I often retreat into through meditation, and focused only on the data. I chose to transcribe the audiotaped material myself, to help understand and appreciate what I had experienced with the participants. Two of the seven audiotapes that resulted from this study were of poor quality and difficult to transcribe due to extraneous noises.

Extraction-Synthesis

Following dialogical engagements with the participants, I simultaneously engaged in extraction-synthesis while being immersed in the data, as I listened to the audiotapes, read the transcripts, and reviewed journal notes. This process of methodological triangulation contributed to the credibility of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Making notes on the margins of the transcripts, I sought to capture the key essences of the participants relating to their experiences as members of RRG. I created statements that, in the language of the participants captured those essences. I then synthesized each participant's essence into my language as the researcher. The participants' essences and the researcher's essences were then transformed into propositions. After formulating the propositions, I extracted and synthesized core concepts to create the structure of the lived experience (Parse, 1987). Throughout the extraction-synthesis process, I conferred with my thesis committee members, communicating my interpretations, providing copies of the transcripts, and soliciting their feedback. A number of thesis committee meetings regarding the data interpretation helped to ensure that my own interpretations remained true to the study data.

To better explicate Parse's research methodology, I have included the following example to demonstrate how Cody and Filler (1999) applied Parse's research process in

the case of one participant, Betty, who described her lived experience of hope in relation to living in a shelter for women. Betty had been enrolled in a substance abuse recovery program at the emergency shelter.

Table 2.2. Essences from Cody and Filler (1999)

Essences: Participant's Language	Essences: Researcher's Language
When the participant's life was all about drugs and alcohol she completely lost hope. But in recovery she believes that life is beautiful, and hope is believing in herself, her spirituality, and tomorrow. The participant believes that taking suggestions and progressing toward something better will lead to regaining a relationship with family and having what she knows she can have.	Appreciation of persisting beyond desolation emerges with graceful trust in potentiality. Venturing surfaces with dreams of communion with attainment.

Proposition: The lived experience of hope is persisting in venturing beyond desolation, as dreams of communion with attainment emerge with graceful trust in potentiality. (p. 215)

Core Concepts: picturing attainment, persisting amid the arduous, trusting in potentiality

Structure [of the Lived Experience]: The lived experience of hope is picturing attainment in persisting amid the arduous, while trusting in potentiality. (p. 222)

Heuristic Interpretation

From the structure of the lived experience, structural integration (structural transposition) and conceptual interpretation (conceptual integration) merged, resulting in heuristic interpretation. Cody and Filler (1999) illustrated the process of heuristic interpretation as follows:

Structural Transposition [Structural Integration]: envisioning triumphs, pushing-resisting with the ups and downs, confirming possibilities

Conceptual Integration [Conceptual Interpretation]: imaging transforming, powering enabling-limiting, valuing. (p. 222)

Cody and Filler went on to create propositions based on the Structural Transposition and Conceptual Integration themes.

Structural Transposition: The lived experience of hope is envisioning triumphs while pushing-resisting with the ups and downs of confirming possibilities.

Conceptual Integration: The lived experience of hope is imaging transforming in powering enabling-limiting of valuing. (Cody & Filler, 1999, p. 222)

I understand structural integration or transposition to be the conversion of the core concepts and structure of the lived experience to a higher level of abstraction, more closely relating to HBT. Similarly, I interpret conceptual interpretation or integration to mean that the ideas identified during structural integration were linked or merged with Parse's theory, contributing to expansion of HBT. From these exercises, ideas for further research and practice were generated. The phenomenon of empowerment, as it emerged from the data, was examined in light of HBT, and HBT was expanded and taken to new levels of specification (Mitchell and Cody, 1993).

Ethical Considerations

This study was conducted utilizing the guidelines set out in the University of Saskatchewan Research Handbook (1995, 2000) and in the University of Saskatchewan Advisory Committee on Ethics in Behavioural Science Research (February 2000). In obtaining consent, participants were informed about the nature and methodology of the study and their questions were invited and answered. All consent forms and audiotapes were kept in a locked cabinet in the researcher's home. Personal identifying information

was not used in transcriptions, and will not be used in reports or publications resulting from the research. Participants selected a pseudonym for use in the research.

The research was approached in accordance with the Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses (Canadian Nurses Association, 1997), and Ethical Guidelines for Nurses in Research Involving Human Participants (Canadian Nurses Association, 1994). Ethical research is based on the three following principles: respect, beneficence, and justice (Canadian Nurses Association, 1994, p.2).

Respect

Respect, an essential element in the United Nations' protocol, and adopted by its 189 member countries, is one of the key principles that, together with recognition and rights, comprise the attitudinal framework and philosophy for cultural safety (Wood & Schwass, 1993). According to the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (10 December 1948), "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights" (Art. 1), and:

Basic principles of equality and non-discrimination as regards the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms forbids distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. (Art. 2, 1948)

Cultural safety is a concept that was adopted by the New Zealand Nursing Council in 1992, as a guideline for nurses to practice in a culturally safe manner within the bicultural New Zealand health field (Ramsden, 1992). Cultural safety is not merely a philosophy, but also a process and a universal practice requirement congruent with United Nations' guidelines. The concepts of cultural sensitivity and awareness are integral elements of cultural safety (Ramsden, 1992).

Kowalsky et al. (1996) proposed guidelines for working within an Aboriginal community. According to Kowalsky et al., the research process involves four basic stages: a stopping stage, waiting stage, transition stage, and movement toward the acceptance stage. In the stopping stage, the researcher is observed by the community prior to engaging in research. The waiting stage is a time of trust building and evaluation by the potential participants. The transition stage involves a degree of disclosure by volunteer participants while the acceptance stage encompasses higher trust and greater involvement by the identified population.

Through use of the above guidelines I sought to foster cultural safety, minimize cultural risk, and ensure participants were not diminished, demeaned, or disempowered (Wood & Schwass, 1993).

Beneficence

The principle of beneficence, according to Burns and Grove (2001), obligates the researcher to do good and avoid harming human subjects. Since the study relied on self-disclosure, the participants determined what, when, and whether they shared any information with me, and had a measure of control relating to the interviews, their transcripts, and their contact and involvement with me. The participants had an opportunity to give voice, reflect, and experience insight and illumination as they disclosed their experiences. In the possible event that a participant experienced a negative perception or distress as a result of the study, I had consulted appropriate agencies and community resources to ensure that necessary help and interventions were available for referral if participants indicated a desire or need for such services.

Rigor and Credibility

To ensure scientific rigor, Burns (1989) outlined five standards for qualitative research: a) descriptive vividness, b) methodological congruence, c) analytic preciseness, d) theoretical connectedness, and e) heuristic relevance.

Descriptive Vividness

According to Burns (1989), descriptive vividness is such a thorough and clear description that the reader has a sense of having personally experienced the event. I stayed close to the words of the participants in stating the essences during the process of extraction-synthesis. I looked at my journal notes, read the transcripts, and listened to the audiotapes while remembering the dialogical engagement. In dwelling with the data, I selected participants' words that best served to capture the meanings in relation to their experiences as members of RRG. Along the margins of each transcript, I wrote key ideas relating to the participants' statements. Creative interpretation moved data from participant descriptions to the language of science. From the participants' transcripts and dialogical engagements, I extracted key ideas that I combined into statements relating to the participants' essences. During extraction-synthesis there was a continuous shifting between the participants' descriptions and my interpretations in order to confirm that I retained the original meanings of the participants.

Methodological Congruence

Burns (1989) maintains that the researcher must have knowledge of the methodology and theory used for the research to ensure methodological congruence. The researcher must be familiar with both the underlying theory as well as the research method utilized in the study in order to ensure methodological congruence. Burns

identifies four dimensions within methodological congruence: a) rigor in documentation, b) procedural rigor, c) ethical rigor, and d) auditability.

To address this requirement, I reviewed HBT and Parse's research method to help me understand Parse's concepts and methods. I reviewed the transcripts, extraction-synthesis, and heuristic interpretations with thesis committee members. Although the committee members were relatively unversed in Parse's research methodology, they were well acquainted with other methods of qualitative research and found that the researcher's methods rendered themes and basic impressions congruent with their own.

Rigor in documentation, according to Burns (1989, p. 48) requires that the researcher document all research elements including "phenomenon; purpose; research question; justification of the significance of the phenomenon." I conducted a comprehensive consideration and recording of the various components of the research, including audiotapes, transcripts, notes, and journals.

To ensure procedural rigor, I followed the processes of the methodology and clearly monitored the steps taken to ensure that all information was accurately recorded. This process was accomplished by comparing audiotapes with the transcribed text for accuracy. To further support credibility, or what Lincoln and Guba (1985) refer to as "truth value", each participant received a copy of his or her transcript to review for accuracy. Following the review of transcripts, participants signed final consent forms (Appendix F) after making any changes they thought necessary. Two participants made substantial additions to their initial dialogues, thereby more fully reflecting their experiences. I presented the core concepts and structure of the lived experience to two of the available participants, for feedback. I phoned two of the participants to discuss

their experiences and my interpretation of them in relation to the core concepts and structure of the lived experience as a member of RRG. Both participants concurred with my findings, although they placed varying emphases on the individual core concepts. Due to difficulties within RRG, I was unable to contact each participant for feedback.

Credibility of the descriptions of the participants was enhanced through methodological triangulation using journal notes, audiotapes, transcripts, and tracking of decisions and perceptions. During the dialogical engagements, I identified or bracketed my past experiences with and assumptions about RRG to ensure that I remained true to the participants' input. To bracket my past experiences, I conceded that they existed and made my focus the dialogical engagements with the participants. My audit trail (Rodgers & Cowles, 1993) comprised a journal that outlined my ideas, beliefs, and feelings. In my past experiences with RRG, I had believed there was harmony and peace within the group, and had seen a bright future for the group. In December 2001, I wrote, "I am excited to rejoin this group since my past experiences with them were so positive. . . These people were so active before, I know they'll go places." Although it was impossible to fully bracket my past experiences, I immersed myself in the study data and consciously tried to be minimally influenced by past information and experiences. However, following the data processing at the conclusion of the study, by using methodological triangulation, I compared my findings to my previous experiences with the group and found they were compatible, thereby helping to confirm the credibility of the data.

Peer debriefing during the analysis of the transcripts, a practice recommended by Lincoln and Guba (1985), was utilized to enhance credibility. I communicated with

thesis committee members on several occasions to discuss the analysis of the data. Following analysis, the core concepts were checked with an experienced community health nurse and worker who confirmed the legitimacy of the themes.

For auditability, a "researcher must report all of the decisions involved in the transformation of data to the theoretical schema" (Burns, 1989, p. 49). This documentation must be sufficiently thorough that a reviewer or other researcher can come to the same conclusions using the original data and decision trail. I kept detailed methodological notes and retained the associated materials, including audiotapes, transcripts, journals, and notes. Additionally, I submitted some of the decision trail to members of the thesis committee to gain input concerning my decision trail.

Analytical Preciseness

Rodgers and Cowles (1993) indicate that "each analytic or theoretical insight, and every speculation, regardless of how trivial or even completely unrelated it may seem at the time, should be immediately and comprehensively recorded in order to ensure a rigorous analysis" (p. 222). I diligently and conscientiously recorded notes throughout the extraction-synthesis process as thoughts, insights, and speculations surfaced. Analytical preciseness was further ensured by the thesis committee's reviews of the extraction-synthesis process, as earlier reported.

Theoretical Connectedness

In order to ensure theoretical connectedness, Burns (1989, p. 50) states that there must be a clear expression of the theoretical schema that is "logically consistent, reflective of the data, and compatible with the knowledge base of nursing." From my initial definition of empowerment, which I understood to be taking the power and

mobilizing it, I was able to detect signs of empowerment from the participants' language, and to incorporate these findings in the participants' and researcher's propositions; for example, "standing tall," was considered to be a sign of empowerment. I connected the theories of Parse and Rogers, eminent nursing theorists, with the findings from this study, and thus enhanced the knowledge base of nursing. To facilitate theoretical connectedness, I referred to my audiotapes, transcripts, and notes while examining the study's theoretical schema in relation to nursing literature. By submitting findings to thesis committee members, I became aware of areas that needed further clarification in terms of logical consistency and congruence with the data.

Heuristic Relevance

In order to ensure heuristic relevance, a reader must be able to identify the "phenomenon described in the study, its theoretical significance, its applicability to nursing practice situations, and its influence in future research activities" (Burns, 1989, p. 51). The three dimensions of heuristic relevance are intuitive recognition, relationship to the existing body of nursing knowledge, and applicability.

Intuitive recognition arises when readers confront the theoretical schema derived from the data and find it has meaning relative to their personal knowledge base. To help ensure this recognition, I clearly defined and described the phenomenon under study, that is, the lived experience of being a member of RRG, the potential relationship with empowerment, and the connection to the Human Becoming Theory of Nursing. HBT is dynamic and broad in scope, and uses true presence, and Parse's research methodology uses true presence and encourages reflection. Connections between the phenomenon and

HBT and Parse's research method are interwoven throughout this paper. The findings are discussed in relation to the existing body of knowledge on the phenomenon.

Applicability occurs when the findings from the research are applicable to nursing practice, contribute to nursing theory development, and guide the development of further nursing research (Burns, 1989). I have included specific implications for nursing practice in this research report, as well as recommendations for further research, and close adherence to Parse's research methodology, which is structured to promote development of nursing theory. This study adds to nursing science's existing body of knowledge by contributing to nursing theory development, and affords opportunities for future nursing research by giving insight into the lived experience of members of RRG.

Transferability

In order to establish transferability, the researcher must provide a rich description of the time and context in which the project takes place (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Details concerning RRG are included in the introduction and throughout the paper, and participants are described in detail.

Dependability and Confirmability

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), confirmability is established by ensuring that the findings are supported by the data. An audit trail consisting of transcripts, raw data, and notes that were made during data analysis remains and will help establish dependability and confirmability. By examining the participants' words and essences (Chapter Three), an auditor would find that the data, interpretations and findings, as well as the recommendations, are congruent.

Delimitations

The scope of this study was delimited to the lived experiences of seven individuals who were active members of Renters' Rights Group. The collective group experience was not studied.

CHAPTER III: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

This study explored the lived experience of members of RRG. Seven members of RRG voluntarily participated in the audiotaped dialogical engagements that comprise this study. Four males and three females, ranging in age between 22 and 56 years took part in the research. Five of the participants self-identified as being of Aboriginal descent. All participants were of low socioeconomic status and five were unemployed at the time of the dialogical engagements. Participants had been members of RRG for periods ranging from two years to seven years, with a mean membership period of four years. Three of the members owned their own houses, while four were renting. One of the participants had a Bachelor's Degree in two disciplines and was seeking employment, while the remainder of the members had a mean education of Grade ten.

This chapter presents dialogical engagements, extraction-synthesis and heuristic interpretations associated with this study's findings. Using Parse's research methodology, the audiotaped dialogical engagements were transcribed verbatim and I immersed myself in, or dwelt with, the transcripts, audiotapes, and journal notes, to explore the meanings participants gave to their experiences. Through extraction-synthesis, I extracted essences, or themes from the dialogues, first in the participants' language, then in the researcher's language. I generated propositions from the participants' and researcher's essences. From these propositions I drew the core concepts that reflect the central meaning of the propositions. I then joined the core concepts to

create the structure of the lived experience, which is a response to the researcher's question (Parse, 1987). Finally, using heuristic interpretation, I placed the findings of this research within the language of Human Becoming Theory (Parse 1987, 1992).

In this chapter, a character sketch and description of each participant is followed by the participant's essences and the researcher's essences. After looking at central themes in the body of the transcript, I looked at descriptions that related to the context of membership in RRG. At the outset, I was not looking for empowerment or powerlessness, but was examining the experience of being an RRG member. Next, I summarized the central ideas and looked at those ideas in relation to change. If RRG had an effect, whether negative, positive, or not perceived by the participants, I wanted to be true to the participants' descriptions and stories. There was a possibility that changes may have been associated with factors outside membership in RRG, but I relied on the participants to explore their experiences in relation to RRG.

Annie: Character Sketch, Quotes, and Essences

Annie is a 56-year-old non-Aboriginal married woman who owns a house on the west side of Saskatoon. Annie has completed grade twelve and is on a disability pension of less than \$10,000 per year. Annie and her husband have lived in Saskatoon for 24 years and she has been an active member of RRG for more than two years. Annie has no children and is unemployed at present. An artist who works with a number of mediums, including oil painting, oil pastels, acrylics, she has received a number of awards for her artistic contributions. In 2002, she was one of the artists involved with creating one of Saskatoon's unique artistic street projects.

As I approached Annie's house, I walked up the wheel chair ramp to the modest single detached dwelling and was greeted by a cheery welcome and invitation to "sit down and make yourself comfortable." The premises were modest, comfortable, and well maintained. A wheel chair, walker, and other devices illustrated some of the challenges Annie faced in terms of her disability. Having exchanged pleasantries and ensured that coffee was poured, we sat down at her kitchen table. The audiotaped dialogical engagement lasted approximately 20 minutes, and the associated transcript was four pages in length. Laughter, pauses, and silence accompanied the audiotaped conversation. I paused the tape periodically at Annie's request and signals. I used the dialogical engagement prompt guide to facilitate our conversation.

Following are some of Annie's words in relation to her lived experience as a member of RRG. Immediately after each topic is the associated page number of the transcript where the statement is located. I have italicized the words that led to the development of the participant's essences.

It gets me out of the house. Helps to make an effort to getting along with friends and neighbours-makes me feel like I am doing something (p. 1). I have been in a wheel chair close to . . . fifteen . . . years. I am a disabled person and I need to phone the bus four days ahead of time (p.1). I just stayed home. I didn't think there was anything left for me (p. 2). Even though it's wheelchair accessible, the dip is pretty steep. It's been hard, in a way . . .the learning process in dealing with people, knowing how to deal with people (p. 1). I hope I will benefit with the experience I have in the office. Getting and trying to get along with people (p. 1). I was stubborn and determined to see what I could do. We're having a challenge, beyond belief. . . for raising funds, because people don't believe we're serious (p. 2). Somehow. . . improve our lifestyle, our hopes, our insights. This is my hope and it's a big challenge (p. 2). I just think I'm doing something. I hope I'm accomplishing something. Working together is a challenge (p. 3).

By dwelling with Annie's transcripts, the audiotapes, and notes, I extracted essences and central ideas and captured them in her "language", that is, in words that

were congruent with her method and style of expression. As I considered these extracted essences, I synthesized them and creatively expressed these ideas more abstractly in the researcher's language.

Table 3.1. Annie's essences

Participant's Language	Researcher's Language
The participant has gone from a place of feeling isolated, staying home and feeling worthless since she couldn't be a benefit to anybody, to where she now feels that she makes a difference and is doing something worthwhile. Although being a member of RRG has been full of struggles and conflicts, the participant indicated that she had learned a lot.	The lived experience of empowerment emerges as isolation and obstacles are overcome and connection is made and fostered, as challenges and conflicts are met and learning occurs, resulting in an increased awareness, perspective, and confidence as something of value is being done.
Obstacles such as transportation and accessibility impeded Annie's involvement with RRG in relation to her disability. Although there have been difficulties in working together in RRG, Annie feels these difficulties are a learning experience and she feels hopeful about the future.	Overcoming obstacles, gracefully dwelling with arising conflicts, and working together to build something of value are evidence of the process of empowerment.
Although working together is a challenge, Annie has felt that the effort involved has been worthwhile. The participant indicated that being a member of RRG has given her life purpose and value despite the struggles and obstacles involved in the process of helping others.	Empowerment is a process that occurs through learning and doing something of value together in connection with others in a group, engaged in meaningful work, and is expressed in contributing by helping others.

From the combined essences of the participant and the researcher, I synthesized and formulated the following *proposition*: Empowerment emerges in the process of connecting with others in community and engaging in learning and applying knowledge to fight and overcome obstacles while doing meaningful work.

Pxk: Character Sketch , Quotes, and Essences

Pxk is a 51-year-old employed man of Aboriginal ancestry. At the time of the study, Pxk's family income was greater than \$30,000, which supported himself, his wife and five children. Pxk owns his own house in the inner city and has lived in Saskatoon for more than five years. Possessing two degrees, Pxk has been involved with RRG for more than seven years. Pxk has done volunteer work for RRG as well as other groups. Pxk hoped to apply his multiple talents and skills in counselling Aboriginal men.

Seated at Pxk's kitchen table, with all the children in school, Pxk and I sipped our coffee and visited. Following an explanation of the procedure and the reading of the consent form, Pxk filled out the demographic sheet (Appendix D), and the audiotaped dialogical engagement proceeded. The audiotaped recording lasted 45 minutes and the associated transcript covered 9 pages of single spaced typing. There were a few interruptions due to visitors and phone calls. From Pxk's transcripts, I extracted some of the central quotations relating to his lived experience as an RRG member.

I needed some social connections, so I got involved with RRG, with a community to address the need of housing. I wanted to help other people, because I experienced the same difficulties (p. 1). We got people to come in and talk about their situation. It was sort of a support group. As a result of that connection with the community, we started spreading out more and getting involved with other organizations. . . Overwhelmed with clients coming in on a regular basis, and trying to help them, advocate for them, mediate with landlords, trying to assist them. . . we would run out of funding (p. 2). I know empowerment is important. *Sometimes you have to sacrifice some of your values. I got to be a catalyst, to make things happen. So I can see the big picture. Sometimes there's a bit of a conflicting situation, then we have to stop and deal with it and try to move ahead* (p. 3). *I feel great about myself, determination, self respect. . . a lot of stuff really gives me courage.* It [RRG] has made me work more efficiently, more honestly, and with more determination. You see a lot of tension, it's best to keep quiet. (p. 4). *I try to encourage people to deal with things. . .you can't really force people to do anything. . .There's a stereotypical image that they're [Aboriginal men] alcoholic, that they're lazy. . .*

on welfare. . . beat up their wives. . . abuse their children. It's a label. . . probably brown skin, and it's just a difference. *I have to live with knowing that I don't have the right qualities to get a really good high paying job* (p. 5). I know if I wasn't doing this, I'd be out there helping some of the Aboriginal men, to try to be a positive influence for their children. I have to go to City Hall tonight, they're trying to establish a casino in the city, and I'm supporting those guys to deter that decision. We get *all these opportunities* to and we rally for justice and *we do what we can to help the oppressed and poor* (p. 6). I'm happy with what I do, working with people. . . because *God helps you go through all these problems* (p. 7). I think the benefit was gaining a lot of knowledge. . . wisdom. . . experience in dealing with conflict. . . *we're the forerunners*. What has not been helpful is the value of all the work. . . we don't have Aboriginal people, reserves, FSIN, the tribal council. . . coming in to say, "Here's some money. You're doing a really good job helping your people. We're doing this for you" (p. 8). *I know that I'm needed there [RRG], and I can't desert these people*. I'm feeling more love toward people, towards even people who are meaning well, and trying to help us. . . *[I] have a need to feed them all this information because I know they're doing something with it, and they're helping make a change with it. I'm in the middle of this, between two differences, trying to establish an understanding*. I need to be patient.

Table 3.2. Pxx's essences

Participant's Language	Researcher's Language
Pxx spoke of how he helped to foster change through sensitive and skilful interactions with others while managing conflict and staying focused on helping the poor and oppressed.	Changes in life patterns and perspectives occur in strategic interactions with others, as skilful leadership helps to manage conflict and foster understanding through sensitive interventions with a focus on mission.
The participant spoke of how he helped to build bridges between community leaders and to foster understanding, even though he often felt frustrated with social injustice.	Connection and collaboration with political and social leaders help to build bridges between community and leaders, despite a sense of frustration with the system.
The participant spoke of how important his own history and experiences were and of how he received support from his spiritual relationship with Christ, which helped him make sacrifices to benefit the group.	Personal experiences and spiritual connections provide a bolster for personal and group strength while making the necessary sacrifices for the good of the group.

I incorporated the participant's and the researcher's essences into the following *proposition*: Empowerment emerges as obstacles are overcome, effecting change on behalf of the powerless through contribution and in connection with group, intent on achieving goals and changing things from the inside out.

Sam: Character Sketch, Quotes, and Essences

Sam is a 54-year-old non-Aboriginal married man who has his own business and his own home. Sam has a grade twelve education and earns less than \$10,000 per year. For 24 years, he has lived in on the west side of Saskatoon. There are no children at home. During the last three years, Sam has been an active member of RRG.

Once the coffee was poured, we visited briefly, and I gave an introduction to the study. I read the consent form to him and he completed the demographic sheet (Appendix D). During the dialogical engagement, Sam spoke quietly and smiled often. The audiotape lasted less than 30 minutes and the corresponding transcript was five pages long.

From Sam's transcripts, after dwelling with the data, I extracted the following core statements relating to his lived experience as a member of RRG:

I sort of felt sorry for myself, depressed and my wife kept bugging me. . . that I should go out and meet people. . . so I came and found it interesting meeting different people, their viewpoints and stuff. It [RRG] gets me out and it changes my thinking on everyday problems instead of feeling sorry for myself. There's other people that have worse problems. . . everybody has their own unique qualities and it's people helping people (p.1). It's frustrating when all we do is yap. . . and get nothing accomplished, but we are a resource, and talk to the right people. . . You have to stay focused. . . we have to set down guidelines. . . and everybody needs to follow them (p. 2). It [RRG] helps me keep more focused, on my life, and seeing other people and how they see things, and trying to understand them when it's almost impossible, but trying to keep an open mind. trying to accomplish something. . . the average knows they're people just like me

and they get shafted. . . they treat them totally different. I like to accomplish everything myself, but I'm just one person and it takes more people than just me to get things accomplished (p. 3). It [RRG] helps me not to be a one man general. We all have to work together. . . You say your piece. . . stand up for what you believe in. . . I can solve almost anyone's problems, except my own (p.4). It [RRG] will go places if we get some decent funding. . . if we can all agree to work together (p. 5).

From Sam's transcripts, after dwelling with all the related data, I extracted the following essences.

Table 3.3. Sam's essences

Participant's Language	Researcher's Language
The participant spoke of feeling lonely and depressed prior to his involvement with RRG, and since becoming a member, although he has gained knowledge and perspective from the group, he indicated that poorly managed internal conflicts are frustrating.	Although depression and isolation prompted involvement in RRG, there are risks as well as rewards in being a member, often resulting in frustration and unresolved problems and conflicts.
The participant indicated that his viewpoints and perspectives had been affected by his association with other RRG group members and how he had a change in his thinking and now focuses on everyday problems instead of feeling sorry for himself.	Changing perspectives and altering life patterns arise with careful appraisal of others' viewpoints and connections within the group.
Although the participant admitted to frustration with the group process, he recognized that RRG is trying to accomplish something and that there is a struggle to be a resource for others like him, who get shafted.	Empowerment is a process that emerges while deliberately pursuing meaningful connections and purposes as a member of RRG.

I incorporated the participant's essences and the researcher's essences into the following *proposition*: Empowerment emerges through a struggle to overcome isolation

and depression while pursuing connection with others involved in a meaningful purpose and is fraught with frustrations as conflicts and struggles threaten new perspectives.

Mini: Character Sketch, Quotes, and Essences

Mini is a 56-year-old divorced woman of Aboriginal ancestry who has two children living at home with her. Mini was unemployed, but did provide childcare for others. Mini has lived for twelve years in Saskatoon's inner city and was living in an apartment at the time of the study. Having a grade eight education, she earns less than \$10,000 annually. For the last 4 1/2 years, Mini has been an active RRG member.

When I entered Mini's apartment on the second floor, I briefly visited with her as she prepared for the dialogical engagement. After I explained the procedure, Mini shared her experiences in relation to the topic. The audiotaping lasted approximately 20 minutes and the associated transcript consisted of four pages of single spaced copy. Mini laughed, smiled, and used many non-verbal expressions, in addition to the dialogue, which contributed to the richness of the experience.

After immersing myself in the data relating to Mini's lived experience as a member of RRG, I identified the following words as revealing her experience.

I guess I was just out there mostly looking for something to do like volunteer work. . . so I go to these meetings and I've learned some things and experienced some things through RRG. I've been educated on how to look out for things when you're renting a place. . . not to be afraid of your landlord. . . but to speak to them like they were coming over for coffee. Before I used to be scared to answer any questions. . . what if I say the wrong things and I'll be evicted immediately. I can tell my friends what is expected of them as a renter. . . I was able to help her that way (p. 1). For a while there I thought we were going to disintegrate because there were so many personal problems and stuff among the group, but I kept going, because I was hoping somehow there would be some resolvment. . . it was a learning experience. So you learn something new every day. . . the more people get to know what goes on at RRG, the more the landlords won't be so quick to evict them or argue with their tenants (p. 2). I am

not afraid to talk anymore. I just say what I have to say. . .instead of sitting. I am able to share the information that I know is floating around in this area and they think I'm smart. I would let them [landlords] talk to me the way they used to, now, I don't let them do that anymore and we get along just fine. . .I'd point the book of rules at them, and they know now that they can't push me around, so they've become my friends (p. 3). There's been some bickering between members, but I made a lot of new friends. . .they know that problem solving is what we need to learn about. . . I dream of a big, big picture for RRG (p. 4).

From Mini's transcripts and related data, in which I immersed myself, I extracted the following essences as being central to her lived experience as a member of RRG.

Table 3.4. Mini's essences

Participant's Language	Researcher's Language
Mini overcame isolation and fear when she joined RRG so she could do some meaningful volunteer work and made a lot of new friends.	As fear and isolation are overcome through connection with a group involved in doing something of value, empowerment emerges.
Since joining RRG, Mini had made new friends and gained a lot of knowledge, and was no longer afraid of her landlord, but spoke to them like they were coming over for coffee. She was able to help others deal effectively with their landlords, sharing knowledge and strategies.	As fear and isolation are overcome through connecting with others, knowledge and awareness of rights, in conjunction with effective strategies for dealing with conflicts and problems, result in the emergence of confidence and courage.
Mini spoke of conflict among RRG members, which threatened to break up the group, but felt that the struggles were opportunities for learning and that, with help in problem solving, the group would benefit.	Struggles within RRG are opportunities to learn and grow while recognizing the need for help in problem solving.

As I considered the essences, I created the following *proposition*, moving the language into a more abstract language: Empowerment emerges in the presence of meaningful group connections that develop as conflicts and challenges are encountered,

acquiring skills and knowledge and contributing to others, result in changing life patterns and perspectives, reflecting pride and confidence.

Hari: Character Sketch, Quotes, and Essences

Hari is a single Aboriginal man, 22 years of age, who has lived in Saskatoon for the past twelve years. Hari, who has completed grade twelve, has a family income of under \$10,000. At the time of the study, he was unemployed and doing volunteer work. He lives in a rented apartment in the inner city. For the past two years, Hari has been an active member of RRG. Hari is a budding poet and artist who is increasingly attracting notice and recognition.

I conversed with Hari over coffee as he showed me some of his artwork and poetry. After an introduction and the preliminary paperwork and overview of the dialogical engagement, the audiotaped portion of our interaction lasted approximately 30 minutes. The associated transcript comprised seven pages of single spaced copy. Hari spoke softly and easily, often stopping to consider his words. Laughter came readily during the course of the dialogue.

From immersing myself in the study data relating to Hari's lived experience as a member of RRG, I identified the following quotations as being vital parts of his experiences.

. . .me, being somewhat shy. . .decided to go one night [to RRG]. . .as I kept attending more and more, I started learning. . .how to deal with certain issues. . . to put things in order. . .and see things they way they will appear to be, instead of just one-sided, I now have a multidimensional way of seeing things. . .I didn't know that a landlord can actually be that dirty. . .underhanded and that scheming. . .and get away with it most times. . .before that I had no idea (p. 1). It's a continual learning experience as you try and basically push on. . .you struggle with the group and go through the ups and downs. . .in the end. . .you'll know so many things and be able to. . .know what you really should know when

it comes to renting. . .*learning your rights*. . .*knowledge that they supply you with*. . .the more you're out there, promoting and spreading the word, you also find. . .people can come to you for advice (p. 2). You've got so many people in the group who also have the same knowledge, that you can go to so many other voices. . .*a very helpful team support attitude*. If we are going to succeed in being a team unit, *helping to fight for all these people, we can't really be fighting among ourselves*. . .we have to learn to put all that aside and focus on the main goal. . .*to stick with our strengths*. . .to put conflicts all aside. When I came into the group, I had no knowledge (p. 3). *I feel totally secure*. . .*complete in a way, with that kind of knowledge*. *It's time for me to take a larger role in the group, rather than sitting on the sidelines*, it's time for me to actually step up and take my turn at the bat. Being around the group. . .I've gradually been *able to learn how to break out of that shell*. . .*and not be so afraid and shy*. We've actually brought hope to so many *who thought they didn't have any hope*. . .*along comes us*. . .*we bring that answer* (p. 4) *and take them out of that dead-end situation*. . .I can just start offering the advice that helps. . .*lift whatever burden that's been put on them*. Most people, when they come to us. . .*have an attitude of feeling weak, insecure, because of the way this person treats them*. *You can actually stand tall again and you've got your own ground to be on when it comes to all this*. . .with the stuff that's been taught. . .*you can fight without being so outnumbered*. . .*you won't struggle as much*. Every question in life has multiple answers. . .you can't always go with the answer that seems like the easiest (p. 5). The group has given me *more confidence*. . .*watching out for cleverly hidden shadows*. . .I know what I know. . .it turns out to be an *extremely wonderful benefit* that everybody can use. I can see the *future being very bright*. . .*we can be a very powerful group in terms of helping*, not only the community, but helping everybody. Basically, the end comes, *you've found yourself in a whole new group of friends*. . .you get attached to them. . .they're in your life so much, helping (p. 6).

From the study data I extracted the following essences as being key ideas in

Hari's description of his lived experience as a member of RRG.

Table 3.5. Hari's essences

Participant's Language	Researcher's Language
The participant spoke of having broken out of his shell and overcome shyness, while gaining confidence since joining RRG, and of having gained a multidimensional perspective as well as knowledge and awareness.	Involvement with RRG has helped Hari overcome shyness and gain confidence while gaining knowledge, awareness, and increased perspective.
The participant spoke of struggles within RRG as being a learning process and of how membership results in being able to fight without being outnumbered and how membership in such a strong group helps in "standing tall" and holding your ground.	There is a sense of identity and solidarity in being a member of RRG, despite internal conflicts, which are opportunities for learning and growth.
The participant indicated that RRG members were so helpful and supportive as they sincerely tried to lift the burdens placed on the poor, that he felt proud of being a part of the group and could see a lot of possibilities for the future among this group of friends.	Meaningful relationships and connections within the group provide support, while contributing and helping others gives a sense of pride and confidence and of possibilities or vision for the future.

Through immersion in Hari's data, constantly comparing the transcripts and essences, I encapsulated the central ideas in the following *proposition*: Empowerment emerges in the presence of community as learning, awareness, and struggles occur while pursuing something of value, giving rise to new perspectives, pride, confidence, and a strong sense of identity and worthiness.

Ernie: Character Sketch, Quotes, and Essences

Ernie is a 30-year-old single Aboriginal woman with a grade nine education and earning between \$10,000 and \$20,000 per year. She is the sole support of three children and lives in a rented house. Ernie describes herself as an unemployed domestic engineer.

For the last eight years, she has lived in the inner city, and has been an active member of RRG for over seven years.

During the dialogical engagement, which was conducted at Ernie's house, we sat at the dining room table as the children and their friends played. Ernie spoke readily and easily about her involvement with RRG and her experiences. The audiotaped conversation lasted approximately 45 minutes and yielded eleven pages of transcript. Our second interaction, during which Ernie signed the final consent sheet (Appendix F) and made a number of additions to the transcript, lasted around 30 minutes.

Immersing myself in Ernie's data, I identified the following statements from her transcripts as being descriptive of her lived experience as a member of RRG.

I was being harassed by my landlords and I was scared to pay my rent, and I was intimidated by the whole process so I was feeling like I was needing to know my rights and where to get support. I was still really concerned about the damage deposit going up and that's what really motivated me to stay in the group, because at first, I wasn't motivated. It was pretty tough, struggling to stay in the group and put up with the housing conditions. . . I wanted to have a stable environment for my kids. . . to know what my rights and responsibilities were, as a tenant, so I could feel like I was doing something to deserve a good home (p. 1). I was never able to deal with a landlord effectively before. . . I was always verbally asking and that would cause a fight or an argument. . . and nothing would get resolved. . . I was threatened one time by my landlord. . . you know that you're not fighting it alone, just being able to tell other people helped a whole lot. . . before it was all bottled up inside (p. 2). I needed friends and people that were experiencing the same thing. . . we were really isolated at home. . . this way I felt that I was doing something proactive. . . [it has been helpful] getting to know the political people, the people that work in the city. . . trying to work correctively and collaboratively with them to create change, positive change . . . to be able to handle the problems instead of pointing fingers. . . we're being helpful to other people to raise awareness about the issues and about the other side of the story (p. 3). It seems like a lot of people have really stood their ground, and put their warrior uniforms on, and stayed tough in this town . . . we're a leader in this city. . . banding together and standing strong for other people who don't really have the empowerment to do so for themselves. . . we've gotten a lot of recognition. . . we want to keep people strong, instead of keeping themselves to the bottom where they can't succeed. Money has been an issue

... *communication is important and we need to deal with conflicts amongst ourselves* (p. 4). We should be able to *speak freely our minds and try to get things to a level where we can feel okay again. . .let those bad feelings go*. At first, I wasn't comfortable with the group. . .didn't feel I belonged. It was about trying to *make some noise in a positive direction* to let people know that there are some problems out there and we can work on them together instead of pointing fingers. . .*trying to get a movement out of people, get them to move in a positive direction instead of against us*. . .we have to watch out for people who try to come into the group to take over. . .making it sound like we're not working (p. 5). *I'm more aware now*. . .I do have rights and responsibilities. . .try to keep up on issues. . .*how we can all try to keep connected and keep working away at these problems* (p. 7). I think a lot of people are knowing and trusting me and I know I'm a resource. . .*it feels good to be able to pick up a phone and deal with a landlord effectively. . .being recognized by landlords and tenants*. . .I've noticed within the group that sometimes *these conflicts can get out of hand* . . . you just have to deal with them. . .*but we have to get these things off our chest*. . . so it's about *raising awareness in our communities*. . .people should be feeling it's time to step up to the plate and not be scared to do so. . .*I feel very empowered to be a voice for the people*. . .that I've been respected. *It's a positive feeling, instead of feeling negatively all the time, like in my situation before* (p. 8). I know there's consequences, but I'm not as scared of them as I used to be . . . it's the right thing, because a lot of children are being affected by their houses. . .*a lot of people are suffering because of bad housing. . .it's a good feeling to be able to be helping and contributing. . .I know these things are very valuable and I consider them a gift. I feel that if we had more tools and resources and support, we could do a lot more in terms of turning things around. . .I think education is the key. . .a high proportion of us are minority, or Aboriginals or poverty stricken* (p. 9). A lot of us have been in that same situation where you just can't face it anymore and you just have to vent. . .*these are true feelings that we can do something productive with those feelings*. We've been doing some research with the university in terms of health and well being and homelessness and I think there's also some research we could be doing on housing. . .I know that the city plans. . .remodelling the way we live in our communities. . .if we had more input into these kind of process, I think we could all benefit. . .if we break that *cycle of uneducated tenants and landlords and really start to educate both sides and come together and break down those divisions so things can change*. We'd like to have our own office, our own centre, where we could have a couple of people working, helping. . .*I think we've earned it. . .we deserve it* (p. 10). *If we could. . .band together to make a stronger voice for what really needs to happen in terms of more safe affordable housing. . .really needs to be voiced...I can't say how loudly*.

From Ernie's transcripts, the following essences encapsulated the descriptions of being a member of RRG.

Table 3.6. Ernie's essences

Participant's Language	Researcher's Language
The participant spoke of having being afraid, sexually harassed by landlords, unjustly treated and discriminated against prior to joining RRG. RRG membership provided group strength to help in fighting injustices and brought respect, recognition, and a reputation of being leaders in the city.	Respect, recognition, and reputation arise as a result of membership in RRG and solidarity gives a sense of collective strength that affords a means of combating inequity and injustice.
The participant spoke of a history of ineffective struggles, fights, and arguments with landlords and social workers that has been overcome through knowledge, skills, and awareness as RRG has fought to bring about changes on behalf of the poor and oppressed, resulting in self respect, confidence, pride, and a sense of entitlement.	A sense of pride, confidence, and self-respect emerges as knowledge, skills, and awareness are exercised as the group struggles to bring about change and help the oppressed have a voice.
The participant spoke of significant relationships at RRG with friends who were experiencing the same things, and working to create positive change so that people can stand their ground, speak their minds, and not be afraid. Ernie spoke of building bridges with political and social leaders to foster understanding and of how pride and satisfaction accompanied the increased group strength and recognition.	Being a change agent and helping others while connecting in significant RRG relationships, and collaborating with political and social leaders fosters a sense of achievement, pride, and strength.

Referring to both the participant's and researcher's essences, I wrote the following *proposition*: Empowerment emerges as bridges of connection are built and understanding and support are communicated while pursuing something of value, as a group, on behalf of others, and sharing acquired resources, such as knowledge, skills, and experience.

Bert: Character Sketch, Quotes, and Essences

Bert is a 34-year-old separated male Aboriginal who has worked as a labourer but is presently unemployed. His income is under \$10,000 per year and he rents a basement suite. He has lived in the inner city for seven years and been an active member of RRG for two years. He has a grade twelve education.

I interviewed Bert at the dining table of his friend. Bert spoke easily, softly, and with many laughs and smiles. The interaction resulted in approximately fifteen minutes of audiotaped dialogue that yielded two and one half pages of transcript.

After immersing myself in Bert's audiotapes, transcript, and my notes, I dwelled with the description of his lived experience as a member of RRG. The following quotations from Bert's transcript seemed to best capture the central ideas.

Just getting to know other people, like different walks of life. . .different ages. . . that's what helps me. I wanted to get involved, because I don't have enough education to go against these landlords (p. 1). [suggestions] More communication among members, follow the policies, and respect one another. . .I look from the outside [now], instead of from the inside. Renter's Rights, it affects my family and community, helping out people who are in need, so that we can get educated from them. I'm just getting more educated. . .just to respect one another (p. 2) Future? RRG needs to apply for a number, a taxable number, so that they can get more corporate sponsors, for taxable donations, I think that's one of the things that needs to change (p. 3).

From Bert's transcripts, in dwelling with the data, I extracted the following essences from his dialogue.

Table 3.7. Bert's essences

Participant's Language	Researcher's Language
The participant spoke of having lacked knowledge and awareness concerning housing issues prior to involvement with RRG, and that he didn't have enough education to fight the landlords prior to becoming a member of RRG, but since then he has gained a different perspective while acquiring knowledge and awareness. Bert also spoke of having made some rich and meaningful relationships with fellow members.	Through pursuing nurturing engagements within RRG, gaining knowledge and awareness of rights and issues has contributed to changes in perspective.
The participant indicated that sharing knowledge and contributing to those in need of help and support has helped in building relationships within RRG.	Contributing by helping others in need provides an outlet for the acquired knowledge and awareness and reinforces the connection with others.
The participant referred indirectly to struggles by saying that communication needs to improve, there is a need to follow policies, and to respect each other. Bert also indicated that funding was insufficient since he spoke of a need for more corporate sponsors.	Struggling to improve communication, follow policies, respect each other, and obtain funding is part of the process of involvement with RRG.

Referring to the participant's and researcher's essences, I wrote the following *proposition*: Empowerment emerges as knowledge and awareness are acquired while engaging in meaningful relationships within the group, through struggles and obstacles, as new perspectives are gained while helping others.

As the next step in Parse's research methodology, I listed the seven propositions from participants' and researcher's essences.

Propositions

- Annie: Empowerment emerges in the process of connecting with others in community and engaging in learning and applying knowledge to fight and overcome obstacles while doing meaningful work.
- Sam: Empowerment emerges through a struggle to overcome isolation and depression while pursuing connection with others involved in a meaningful purpose and is fraught with frustrations as conflicts and struggles threaten new perspectives.
- Pxk: Empowerment emerges as obstacles are overcome, effecting change on behalf of the powerless through contribution and in connection with the group, intent on achieving goals and changing things from the inside out.
- Mini: Empowerment emerges in the presence of meaningful group connections that develop as conflicts and challenges are encountered, acquiring skills and knowledge and contributing to others, result in changing life patterns and perspectives, reflecting pride and confidence.
- Hari: Empowerment emerges in the presence of community as learning, awareness, and struggles occur while pursuing something of value, giving rise to new perspectives, pride, confidence, and a strong sense of identity and worthiness.
- Bert: Empowerment emerges as knowledge and awareness are acquired while engaged in meaningful relationships within the group, through struggles and obstacles, as new perspectives are gained while helping others.
- Ernie: Empowerment emerges as bridges of connection are built and understanding and support are communicated while pursuing something of value, as a group, on behalf of others, and sharing acquired resources such as knowledge, skills, and experience.

From the above propositions, I again immersed myself in the data, analyzed the propositional statements and extracted the four core concepts.

Core Concepts

Four core concepts are evident in the seven propositions: connecting, struggling, contributing, and changing. Connecting can be viewed as actively seeking out significant engagements. Struggling is a process that occurs in the participant, within the group, and in the community as something of value is being pursued and resistance and

opposition are overcome. Contributing involves sharing and helping others. Changing occurs as a mutual process within the individual, group and community as new knowledge, awareness, and skills are developed and expressed.

The following sections of this chapter expand on the participants' essences, from which the propositions were formulated. After determining core concepts from the propositions, I once again perused the data to validate the core concepts. Each participant's transcript was reviewed for essences pertaining to each of the four central concepts, and the results were consolidated under their associated concepts, as indicated. Where raw data were particularly vivid, direct quotes were retained.

Connecting

Individual participants referred to various aspects of connecting in relation to their lived experience as members of RRG. Annie considered membership in RRG to be a significant affiliation and was concerned with participation in making a difference. Pxx spoke of connecting with other groups and community, of bridging the gap, of spiritual connection with God, and of "rallying for justice." Sam identified collaboration and connecting with the group as being important aspects of RRG membership. Mini regarded participation and significant nurturing engagements as being important. Hari and Bert spoke of participation and significant affiliations. Ernie associated connecting with breaking barriers of isolation, significant engagements, connecting with community, and a sense of belonging.

Struggling

In relation to struggling, Annie spoke of internal conflicts in the group and of difficulty in accessing necessary resources. Pxx associated struggling with difficulties

accessing necessary resources, social injustices, racial prejudice, and with "trying to get a movement out of people." Sam identified internal conflicts and difficulties with conflict resolution and problem management as being detrimental to RRG. Mini spoke of struggling within herself, of having been afraid, lacking confidence, and of dealing ineffectively with landlords. Hari spoke of struggling with shyness and fears, and of group conflicts. Bert also indicated that communication and consistency in adhering to policies were needed by RRG members. Ernie spoke of fighting injustice, slum landlords, poverty, poor housing, and possessing inadequate tools, resources, and support.

Contributing

In relation to contributing, various aspects of sharing and helping were presented. To Annie, contributing was associated with being a benefit to others, making a difference, and doing something useful. Pvk said that helping the oppressed and poor and acting as a change agent were important. Sam regarded acting as a resource as being important to contributing. Mini regarded sharing valued knowledge and information as significant. Hari stated, "We can be a powerful group in terms of helping others." Bert spoke of helping out people who are in need. Ernie identified helping, contributing, and building capacity through education and training as being important elements of membership in RRG.

Changing

The participants related various aspects of changing associated with their membership in RRG. Annie indicated that she valued herself and her contribution to others, and thus feeling worthwhile. Pvk spoke of gaining confidence, determination,

self respect, and courage and of "being a voice for the people" and a "forerunner." Mini spoke of not being afraid of landlords, being educated, and developing patience and interpersonal skills and effectively dealing with landlords. Hari spoke of "breaking out of the shell" and "seeing multidimensionally", and of "standing tall" and learning. Bert said he had gained awareness and knowledge, while Ernie spoke of being recognized for doing something good, and of a sense of entitlement, pride, and achievement.

Structure of the Lived Experience

From the four core concepts, connecting, struggling, contributing, and changing, the structure of the lived experience of being members of RRG was synthesized. The lived experience of empowerment emerges as participants connect, struggle, contribute, and change.

The research questions were: 1) What is the structure of the lived experience of individuals in the context of their membership in Renters' Rights Group? 2) What is the relationship between the structure of their lived experience and the phenomenon of empowerment?

An illuminating response to the first research question is, "The structure of the lived experience of members of RRG members is a process of connecting, struggling, contributing, and changing." The second question elicits a reiterative response, that is, the structure of the lived experience of membership in RRG is intrinsically related to the process of empowerment. The process of empowerment is embedded in and embodied by the lived experience of being an active member of RRG, which Barrett, 1983 (as cited by Wall, 2000, p. 235) describes as power and "the way humans actualize their development potentials, and it is characterized by awareness, choices, freedom to act

intentionally, and involvement in creating change." Since RRG members participate in the processes Barrett outlines in relation to power, there are grounds for believing that empowerment is occurring, and that individuals are intentionally and knowingly participating in change.

Heuristic Interpretation

Heuristic interpretation refers to the blending of the participants' experiences with Parse's Human Becoming Theory. Inherent in her research methodology is a requirement to link research findings with HBT, in order to further nursing science. Using the final steps of her research methodology, that is, the processes of structural integration and conceptual interpretation, heuristic interpretation occurs, and the lived experience of the members of RRG is blended with the concepts of HBT. Structural integration and conceptual interpretation are the processes that "move the discourse of the structure to the discourse of the theory" (Parse, 1998, p. 65).

Structural Integration

As I engaged in the first process, structural integration, I examined the four core concepts and created intermediary themes that would then be used to bring the participants' lived experience closer to the themes of HBT. Structural integration takes the structure of the lived experience to a higher level of abstraction.

From the consolidation of participants' essences, it was evident that the core concept of connecting had meaning, value, and significance. For study participants, connecting embodied significant affiliations, collaboration, spiritual connection, participation, solidarity, significant engagements, and connections with the community.

These connections were pivotal for them, that is, they were of vital importance in their lives. They had *pivotal involvement*.

The core concept of struggling is related to overcoming obstacles and dealing with conflict. Participants struggled with external conflicts, poor communication, obtaining necessary resources, and in overcoming fears and difficult behaviours. They rallied as they struggled. Thus an associated theme for the core concept of struggling is *overcoming obstacles/conflicts*.

The core concept of changing is closely aligned with entering into new ways of being. Changing entailed transformation, new possibilities, and vision. Participants gained confidence, valued themselves and their contributions, and overcame fear. They began to see multidimensionally and to "stand tall." These changes indicate an alteration in perception, behaviour, and attitude consistent with *new ways of being*.

The core concept of contributing is linked with sharing/giving. Participants contributed by helping others, being of benefit to others, making a difference, and acting as change agents. Contributing is central to RRG's mission, that is, working together to build a safe and healthy community (RRG, 1998).

Through the process of structural integration, I identified associated themes for the core concepts and created a research proposition that is an intermediate step in the heuristic interpretation of the research findings. The following research proposition evolved through the process of structural integration:

The empowerment experienced by the research participants as members of RRG embodies pivotal involvement arising with propelling fortitude [resolute forging ahead]

and energy, as they are engaged in overcoming obstacles and sharing/giving as new ways of being are created.

After identifying associated themes and creating the structural integration research proposition, I examined these themes and linked them with Parse's HBT through a process of conceptual interpretation.

Conceptual Interpretation

What I identified as pivotal involvement is congruent with Parse's connecting/separating. Pivotal involvement means that people choose one thing while separating from another. There is a rhythmical pattern of relating in which they attribute value and meaning to a given situation or pattern in preference to another situation or pattern. Parse's connecting-separating happens simultaneously as a result of freely choosing. Participants were not forced to join or to remain in RRG; nonetheless, they have all remained active members for a period of more than two years. When a participant chooses to attend a meeting with other RRG members, this choice necessitates absence from other places and activities during the course of the time period in which the participant remains at the meeting, since humans are limited in time and space.

The structural integration theme of overcoming obstacles/conflicts is linked with Parse's powering/valuing, where potential risk is encountered and the unknown is met. In powering, there is a process of "pushing-resisting" (Parse, 1998, p. 47) in which possibilities, vision, and dreams are considered, resulting in some anxiety and hesitation. Conflict may surface at this point, but "conflict offers opportunities for individuals to examine the worldviews of others in situation and to make choices with

others to move beyond with new possibles" (Parse, 1998, p. 49). In valuing, according to Parse (p. 37), there is a process of weighing, choosing, prizing, and reflecting that results in actions congruent with the value attributed to the meaning. Since these participants continued to be involved with RRG and overcame obstacles to do so, they apparently place value on the activities.

Similarly, the structural integration theme of sharing/giving, is also linked with Parse's powering/valuing. The mission of RRG involves helping others and building community, necessitating sharing and giving. Parse's valuing is evident in the sharing of resources, knowledge, skills, and public service with the community. If participants did not value RRG and its mission, they would not choose to participate in the group. Membership is voluntary, and an effort is required to attend meetings and participate in activities. With limited time, funds, and energy, marginalized people are unlikely to make the effort to become active members of a group such as RRG.

The associated theme of new ways of being is linked with Parse's originating/transforming. Originating refers to vision and the imagining of possibilities and new opportunities. Parse describes originating as an identifiable feature of human becoming, in which one is "living the paradox of certainty-uncertainty" and changing or "cotranscending with the possibles" (1998, p. 51). Transforming is part of the change process in which "the human co-participates with the universe in mutual emergence" (Parse, 1998, p. 51). Unique possibilities arise as humans reflect and make choices, changing and transforming in an interconnected mutual process with the universe. Transformation was evident when one participant stated, "I used to be that person. Now I don't want to be no more." She reflected on the past, and chose to be different in the

future from what she previously was. Parse (1998) indicated that there is a paradox because when one adopts a new insight, one can no longer return to past viewpoints, but must move toward other possibilities.

Thus, through the processes of structural integration and conceptual interpretation, I brought the structure of the lived experience to a higher level of abstraction and linked it with Parse's HBT. The following research proposition evolved from the process of conceptual interpretation:

Empowerment as experienced by study participants as members of RRG embodies connecting-separating in the powering/valuing of originating and transforming.

Figure 3.1 depicts the transition of the core concepts of the research finding through structural integration and conceptual interpretation to link them with Parse's HBT.

Table 3.8. Heuristic interpretation: A guide

CORE CONCEPTS	connecting	contributing	struggling	changing
Structural Integration Themes	pivotal involvement	sharing/ giving	overcoming obstacles/ conflicts	new ways of being
Conceptual Interpretation Themes	connecting- separating	powering- valuing	powering- valuing	originating- transforming

CHAPTER IV: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter includes a review of literature relevant to this study, beginning with an overview of literature on various aspects of empowerment. Studies related to disempowerment, powerlessness, and marginalization are also reviewed. There is an examination of some local and international studies that involved Aboriginal participants. The final section of the literature review is focused on studies that have been conducted using Parse's research methodology, as well as literature and studies based on Martha Rogers' theory. The individual core concepts are discussed in relation to the literature, and the chapter closes with a general discussion of the findings and their significance.

Relevant Literature

A Google Search showed 841,000 entries for the term, empowerment and a Usask Search netted 6392 entries. Limiting the search to research, the lived experience of empowerment, community building, and marginalization resulted in 1,050 references. Further limitation of the search to empowerment, health, marginalization, oppression, community building, community development, and powerlessness netted 123 references. However, upon investigation these references had only marginal relevance for my study, since many of the references were related to social work and political movements and were beyond the scope of my study.

Despite the preponderance of literature relating to the topic of empowerment, there is little consensus as to what the word actually means. I focused on studies and literature that were most closely related to Labonte's (1994) concept of empowerment and that incorporated the ideas of freedom, individual choice, and equality. According to Labonte (n.d., p. 5), empowerment is "the capacity to define, analyze, and act upon one's life and conditions." Both Parse's and Martha Rogers' theories embodied these qualities and contained attributes that symbolized equality; I have included some of their studies in this section of the paper.

Empowerment is frequently studied in a popular form of action research known as empowerment research. One type of research, empowerment evaluation, is "part of the intellectual landscape of evaluation", as Fetterman, 2001 (p.1) notes, and is used across various disciplines. Empowerment evaluation has its origins in community psychology, action anthropology, and action research and has been used in the evaluation of a wide range of program and policy sectors. Empowerment evaluation, similar to action research, uses concepts, techniques, and findings to "foster improvement and self-determination" (p. 3). Although it is generally used to evaluate programs, empowerment evaluation is also applicable to individuals, organizations, and communities. Designed to enable people to help themselves and improve their programs through the process of self-evaluation and reflection, empowerment evaluation is a valuable form of research that relies on a strong sense of caring, without which, Fetterman states, "there can be no sense of community" (2001, p. 6).

To better understand empowerment, I looked at literature that identified courage as being an integral part of being human. Participants of RRG struggled as they

connected, changed, and contributed. They experienced perseverance, risk taking, overcoming obstacles and conflicts, and faced personal fears. Bournes (2000, p. 143) described courage as being "deliberate steadfast risking while creatively living the cherished with opportunities-restrictions." Courage was defined as "inner strength" (Frankl, 1986); internal power resulting in self-affirmation (Kohut, 1992); and energy (Bologna, 1996; Murray et al., 1989; Rogers, 1993). According to Servan-Schreiber (1987), courage is the force that propels people into persistent engagement in their daily struggles. Courage, according to May (1975) is an essential element of creativity since creativity incites jealousy among society's norm keepers.

Empowerment is essential to health, according to Wallerstein (1992), a noted health authority. From her examination of literature, Wallerstein concluded that powerlessness is a risk factor for disease while empowerment is a "health-enhancing strategy" (p. 197). "People with enough resources in their lives, such as decision-making power, finances, or system access, can adequately cope with the psychological demands in their lives" (p. 200). I disagree with this statement, since resources may not be the only factor to determine responses to psychological demands. However, Wallerstein made a clear linkage between empowerment and health, as well as powerlessness and disease. This identification of empowerment as being a health inducing strategy reinforces the necessity of incorporating it into all realms and aspects of health care. Wallerstein advocated the use of Paulo Freire's educational model in which "the central premise is that the social context of education or, in this case, health education, is not neutral" (p. 203). According to Freire (1974) the purpose of education is to liberate humans and to restore their humanity. Wallerstein proposed an Empowerment

Education Model incorporating listening, dialogue, collective action, and critical thinking to facilitate the empowerment process.

In regard to the application of techniques that aid in fostering empowerment and community health, Sibbald (2002) described the role community development and individual empowerment played in economically challenged areas of Newfoundland. She focused on Murphy's role as a community activist and psychiatric nurse in fostering community health. One of the hallmarks of Murphy's work, as depicted in television and documentary reports, was how she "reflects people's strengths back to them" so they can "celebrate that and it might help in their healing and capacity building" (Sibbald, p. 51). Murphy focused on "recognizing the expertise of the individual and working in partnership" (Sibbald, 2002, p. 51). By giving the power to the people, and fostering it, rather than hoarding it in the traditional patriarchal manner, Murphy enhanced individual and community well-being. For members of RRG, respect, fairness, equity, and equality are values that require considerable development, and are best facilitated by a supportive environment that enhances individual empowerment.

Impetus for empowerment was a process and a constant struggle, according to Lord and Hutchison (1993), generally triggered by a crisis or life transition, frustration, new information, and a building of inherent strengths and capabilities. As "individuals became aware of their own capacities and of alternatives to the experience of powerlessness . . . [they] began to develop new directions for themselves" (pp. 11-12). Self-motivation was an essential part of the empowerment process in terms of self-control and self-participation. Self-efficacy, or what Bandura (1986) describes as "people's evaluation of their capabilities to organize and carry out activities required to

attain personal goals" (as cited in Lord & Hutchison, 1993, p. 13), was important in helping foster confidence and enhance participation and initiative. Other key elements in the process of empowerment included support from people (practical, moral, and mentoring), access to valued resources, and participation (reducing isolation, expanding participatory competence and contributing, becoming more socially active).

Labonte (1994) spoke of community as being the "engine of health promotion" (p. 260), and "vehicle of empowerment." However, he identified the small group as being the core of change, since identities are forged and purpose created through interaction with others. Labonte claimed that control, capacity, coherence, connectedness, and critical consciousness are health characteristics essential to empowerment. It takes a period of one to two years for disconnected individuals to become sufficiently cohesive as a group and to self-identify as group members.

According to Hall (1999), marginalized people, or those on the edges of the dominant society, are susceptible to health risks as a result of discrimination, environmental danger, trauma, severe illness, unmet subsistence needs, and restricted access to health care. Hall recognized that collective activism helps provide positive images for marginalized people and increases social support as well as public visibility. Individual resilience is bolstered through group strength and social support, promoting survival and health. Hall maintained that the concept of marginalization is highly relevant to the sociopolitical dimensions of nursing. Nurses, according to Hall, can aid in the social transformation of society, particularly in relation to health care. Similarly, Roberts (1983), referring to marginalization in nursing, wrote about oppressed group behaviour and its implications. Since nurses have been subject to controlling and

powerful forces outside themselves that have greater power, status, and prestige, they have experienced a degree of marginalization, perhaps not as severe as those who have much lower socioeconomic status and even fewer advantages. As nurses become increasingly empowered, they will be better positioned and equipped to advocate for and influence individuals and groups who are marginalized.

Vingilis and Sarkella (1997) discussed the sustainability of human health and well-being and examined determinants and indicators as an important primary step to community education and mobilization. In highlighting examples from Ontario findings, the authors found that housing conditions and poverty were largely unrecognized as being primary determinants of a community's health. Vingilis and Sarkella (1997) identified income and social support as major protective factors concerning health. Resiliency in individuals, fostered by protective factors, is enhanced by individual, familial, and support factors, such as supportive environments. The Ontario findings indicate there is a relationship between such factors as low income status and increased crime, less healthy lifestyles, and higher incidence of disease. Individuals and families with higher income status had a lower incidence of crime, disease, and more healthy lifestyles than those of low income. While well-being indicators are useful, the sustainability of health and well-being could be jeopardized by government policies that affect other aspects of life, resulting in an imbalance that undermines health.

In further research related to empowerment, Lord and Hutchison (1993) conducted a qualitative study with 41 men and women whose experience of powerlessness was attributed to the cumulative effect of multiple factors and experiences. Common to all participants was the perception of being isolated from the

greater society as a result of factors including neglect, abandonment, and problems associated with the participants' disabilities. One of the major challenges to empowerment involved escaping isolation.

In Lord and Hutchison's study, unresponsive services and systems contributed to the feelings of disempowerment by merely addressing the symptoms of problems, rather than the real issues underlying those problems. Poverty was recognized as contributing to a sense of disempowerment due to its associated effects such as being forced to live in substandard housing among others who were poor, reliance on social assistance, loss of control, loss of self-esteem, invasion of privacy, perpetuation of dependence on the system, being seen as not trustworthy, and feeling oppressed.

Feminist research was also considered within the literature review since feminism seeks to equalize power relations between genders, thereby affording women political, social, and economic equality with men. Although four of the study participants were men, feminist issues have significance for them as well. Feminist research seeks to expose existing patriarchal power relations and to emphasize necessary societal actions to bring about change (Burns & Grove, 2001). Of particular interest to this study, is Dixon's "Feminist Developmental Model of Empowerment" (1997), relating to oppression in nursing, which she developed as a project during her graduate nursing studies. Dixon found that intrapersonal connections, growth, integration, and personal efficacy and political competence were essential components of the empowerment process. Intrapersonal connection was associated with finding one's voice and valuing oneself and others; growth was related to discovering and developing skills and abilities; integration, with developing awareness of the etiology of

oppression and of building solidarity among nurses; and personal efficacy and political competence were associated with becoming more assertive and effective in interpersonal relationships and taking political action.

To further broaden the search and bring it closer to the local context, I reviewed a study conducted by the Prairie Women's Health Centre of Excellence (PWHCE). In June, 2001, the researchers studied low-income mothers working toward a healthier community. Two groups of seven to eight women were engaged in mural creation as well as making a story book, visually representing both healthy and unhealthy aspects of their communities. The purpose of the project was to connect low-income mothers of pre-school children who were interested in building healthy communities. Most of the participants were of Aboriginal ancestry, single parents, and on social assistance.

The mothers valued connecting with other adults in a climate of understanding, producing something tangible, and the general group atmosphere of harmony and productivity. The mothers concluded that poverty was the underlying core problem and chose to focus their time on this subject. Connecting was a vital goal and strength of this project, and contributing, in terms of the mural and storybook were valued outcomes of the project. From the comments made by participants, it is evident that some changes were effected, including consciousness raising, awareness, a feeling of solidarity, and connection. Struggling was not verbalized to any great degree, but poverty and unhealthy neighbourhoods were pinpointed as being problematic. This project was considered helpful and supportive by the participants and outlined many of the problems associated with parenting in poverty. Empowerment, in this project, was based on

Labonte's (n.d., p. 5) definition "the capacity to define, analyze, and act upon problems in one's life and living conditions."

The book that resulted from the project by PWHCE (2001), as written by Green and participants of "We Did It Together", shares the stories of eight low-income mothers and suggests changes they would like to see in their communities. Some of their recommendations include: an end to poverty and "poor-bashing" (p. 40), more value placed on parenting, safe and affordable housing, access to affordable shops and services, as well as more control over community affairs. One of the statements made that dispels the myth the poor don't want to work, they're just lazy is that "surviving poverty requires a lot of creativity, resourcefulness, and hard work" (p. 37). Poverty, in the presence of sustained support, exerts a pressure that is a catalyst for change.

The Saskatchewan Women's Secretariat (November 1999) examined the profile of Aboriginal women in Saskatchewan and concluded that "low income and social status as well as exposure to violence are among the factors that need to be considered in relation to the health status of Aboriginal women" (p. 44). A number of other factors were found to impact health including social support networks, education, employment, environments, biology, personal health practices and coping skills, healthy child development, accessibility and availability of health services, gender, and culture. Since all the RRG participants are negatively impacted by several factors that influence health, regardless of gender and racial origin, it is important to realize and address the underlying factors that contribute to ill health. Aboriginal women may be more compromised in terms of health than others involved in the present study, but measures

to alleviate factors impinging on health would likely benefit others in the inner city community.

Also in relation to the Aboriginal population, Kowalsky et al. (1996), in a study on perceptions and beliefs of Northern community members concerning fetal alcohol syndrome and fetal alcohol effects (FAS/FAE), found that there are some guidelines for professionals that are important in the promotion of cultural sensitivity when working among Aboriginal people. Some of these guidelines reflect the findings of McFarlane and Fehir's 1994 study on empowerment among American indigenous women. Both studies emphasized the importance of time, temperament, and trust when working with Aboriginal people. While McFarlane and Fehir stressed the importance of community empowerment initiatives in enhancing individual and collective self-esteem and power, Kowalsky et al. examined the process of entry into an Aboriginal group as well as specific guidelines to facilitate that process.

One of the studies most relevant to my study is one in which Dickson (2000) used participatory action research to examine the experiences of 14 Aboriginal grandmothers with health promotion. In this two and one half year study of a group of Aboriginal grandmothers in Saskatoon, Dickson fostered empowerment through the participative, educative, and probing elements of transformatory research. Dickson sought to examine the effects of participation in a health promotion project. Some of the key elements uncovered by this qualitative study included cleansing and healing, external exposure and engagement, connecting with self, acquiring information and skills, and connecting within the group (Dickson, 2000, p. 195). Dickson concluded from her study that, "The process of personal empowerment--of increasing awareness,

confidence, and voice--is as important as other political successes of a more tangible nature" (p. 211). The Aboriginal grandmothers' experiences with health promotion and participatory action research contributed to a number of changes that are congruent with empowerment: cleansing and healing, connecting with self, connecting with group, acquiring information and skills, and connection within the group (p. 195).

Since a common theme in the experience of the indigenous populations of North America, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand is dispossession and alienation of their lands and resources as a result of colonization, I drew on international literature. A brief summary of relevant studies relating to community development and empowerment highlights some important findings. Voyle and Simmons (1999) found from their study of Maori community members in New Zealand that, due to a legacy of oppression, a residue of mistrust and cynicism remained. Building trust was seen to be an essential element of community development, and, as indicated by a cultural advisor, there was a need "to adjust western time frames to allow time for trust to build" (p.1043). According to Voyle and Simmons (1999), key lessons included the importance of considering historical context, avoidance of disempowering practices, and the allowance of adequate time for establishing trust.

Zachary (2000) found that rituals of engagement, power sharing, a culture of participation involving respect and safety; high expectations and skilful, though humble facilitation were essential to create solidarity and equality within the group. The focus of this seven-year project was on building grassroots leadership and rebuilding community. An interesting finding from this study concerned the misuse of leadership power by

grassroots leaders who were suddenly thrust into the limelight even though they had not previously been recognized.

Rothman (2000) discussed the collaborative self-help approach to community development that prevailed over many years in the aftermath of World War II. Inequities derailed much of the effectiveness of such programs and efforts. From an analysis of 62 projects, Rothman identified seven factors that favour the likelihood of success in community development: the community has a baseline of capacity; the goal can be achieved by relatively simple tasks; there is community commitment to the project; small scale projects will accomplish the goal; there is a common interest; the benefits are tangible; and benefits are likely to outweigh the costs.

Although there are many community development organizations, grassroots organizations, and programs that are routinely evaluated, there seems to be little research concerning the individual members' perceptions and experiences that relate to empowerment within these groups. There is a need to be sensitive to the effects of the interventions and practises that are assumed to be fostering empowerment, and to seek to hear the voice of the people concerned. Furthermore, there is a need to examine the effects of membership and participation in community development processes and movements, in order to understand and determine how so-called empowerment fostering practises are perceived and experienced by individuals.

Since Parse's philosophical and theoretical foundations are largely rooted in those of Martha Rogers, I examined studies based on Rogers' theories and literature. Barrett (1990), a powerful voice and advocate for Rogers' Science of Unitary Human Beings, developed a power theory based on Rogers' helicy principle. Rogers defined

power as "the capacity to participate knowingly in the nature of change characterizing the continuous patterning of the human and environmental fields as manifest by awareness, choices, freedom to act intentionally, and involvement in creating change" (Barrett, 1990, p. 108). To measure this power, Barrett developed the Barrett Power as Knowing Participation in Change Tool, which assigns a numeric value to 13 different attributes and their counterparts. This instrument is administered to manifest baseline patterns and is used to promote knowing participation in change through a process of deliberate mutual patterning or health patterning.

Barrett also described the application of Roger's Science of Unitary Beings in the practice setting where the nurse acts as a "human energy field" in reference to the client who is another element in the environmental energy field (Barrett, 1990, p. 119).

"Human field pattern" is appraised through pattern manifestations involving experience, perception, and expressions (Barrett, 1990, p. 52). The nurse deliberately uses power in promoting the client's health.

Wall (2000) used Martha Rogers' theory to examine the relationship between exercise and changes in hope and power among patients with lung cancer. She concluded that there is a positive correlation between hope and power, and that "exercise is a form of knowing participation in change and illustrates a relation between one's ability to envision a better future and one's potential to actualize options through choice" (Wall, 2000, p. 234).

Published studies using Parse's Human Becoming Theory and research methodology were diverse, although there were no studies specifically targeted at empowerment among marginalized people involved in a grassroots organization such as

RRG. Studies using HBT and Parse's research method include such topics as the lived experience of hope (Allchin-Petardi, 1999; Baumann, 1999; Bunkers, 1999; Cody & Filler, 1999; Kelley, 1999; Mitchell, 1999; Parse, 1999; Pilkington & Millar, 1999; Willman, 1999; Zanotti & Bournes, 1999), feeling understood (Jonas & Simpson, 2001), having courage (Bournes, 2000), persevering through a difficult time (Allchin-Petardi, 1996), and feeling loved (Baumann, 2000).

There were many studies exploring the structure of the lived experience of hope. Since hope, according to Frankl (1986) is a process of choosing personal meaning in life situations, studies of hope can help bring understanding as to how members of RRG view their involvement with the group in relation to the process of empowerment. Jevne, 1992 (as cited by Parse, 1999, p. 18) describes hope as "a process issuing out of the creative tension between what is and what is believed possible." Jevne identified coping, courage, faith, resilience, and empowerment as being related to hope.

For family members of persons living in a chronic care facility, "Hope is persistently anticipating possibilities amid adversity, as intimate engagements emerge with expanding horizons" (Parse, 1999, p. 73). For those working with homeless persons, "The lived experience of hope is envisioning possibilities amid disheartenment, as close alliances with isolating turmoil surface in inventive endeavoring" (Bunkers, 1999, p. 247). Hope as lived by Native Americans is "transfiguring enlightenment arising with engaging affiliations, as encircling the legendary surfaces with fortification" (Kelley, 1999, p. 256). The lived experience of hope for women residing in a shelter is "picturing attainment in persisting amid the arduous, while trusting in potentiality" (Cody & Filler, 1999, p. 222). Lastly, the lived experience of hope for children in

families struggling to make a home is "the envisioning of nurturing engagements while inventing possibilities" (Baumann, 1999, p. 207).

From these international studies on hope there are some central ideas that shed light on human experiences in relation to hope. Envisioning possibilities is often accompanied by adversities and negative tension. There is a sense of persistent awareness and deliberate effort in moving on. Both opportunities and restrictions are present as the envisioned possibilities are pursued. Additionally, nurturing engagements contribute to the experience.

Two other studies using HBT and Parse's research have relevance to my study as they deal with feeling loved (Baumann, 2001) and feeling understood (Jonas-Simpson, 2001), which are essential human needs and may be fostered in such a group as RRG. For women in a parolee program, "Feeling loved is linked to living freedom, trust, and hope" (Baumann, p. 332). Feeling understood, for ten women living with an "enduring health situation", was "an unburdening quietude with triumphant bliss arising with the attentive reverence of nurturing engagements, while fortifying integrity emerges amid potential disregard" (Jonas-Simpson, 2001, p. 222).

In my study I identified four core concepts that were important to empowerment for members of RRG: connecting, struggling, contributing, and changing.

Connecting

RRG was initially formed as a support group for people of low income who were experiencing housing problems. From the outset, social support and connecting with others who shared the common experience of poverty was facilitated by the organization and the clinic with which it is in partnership. Gradually the organization evolved into a

tenant advocacy and mediation group, addressing pressing housing concerns through a united or corporate effort and voice.

The first core concept, connecting, began for participants when they made an effort to overcome isolation and attend meetings of RRG, and continued with their ongoing membership that resulted in a sense of valuing as they forged an identity with the group. With continued involvement in the group and its related activities, significant engagements and relationships developed. This identity and valuing is consistent with Labonte's (1994) premise that a period of one to two years is necessary for individual members of small groups to identify as being group members. Overcoming social isolation, according to Lord and Hutchison (1993, p. 10), is a major consideration for marginalized people. Labonte (1994, p. 260) used the terms "connectedness" and "coherence" to refer to the phenomenon that I identified as connecting. Similarly, Dickson (2000, p. 196) identified connecting as being both within group and with self. Zachary (2000, p. 71) noted the importance of participation.

In my study, participation, significant affiliations and engagements, connections with community and other groups, and solidarity were seen as being important aspects of connecting by RRG members. One participant spoke of wanting "to get out of the house", to do something; another indicated he wanted "to get involved"; while another spoke of being "in the middle of this. . .trying to establish an understanding." Significant engagements were mentioned by a number of the participants. Hari said, ". . .you can totally trust them. . .you've found yourself in a whole new group of friends." Solidarity among RRG members was viewed as significant to the organization as indicated by one participant who spoke of "rallying for justice." Lord and Hutchison (1993) identified

"expanding participatory competence" that developed as new skills were learned through community participation (p. 16).

Collaboration was identified as being important to Sam, who said, "...we all have to work together." Spiritual connection was considered valuable by one participant as reflected in the words "...my belief in Christ, that God is with me to help me." To this participant, reliance on God provided the anchor and source of his power.

In the Human Becoming Theory (Parse 1981, 1992), the core concept connecting, is conceptually interpreted as connecting-separating. Connecting-separating is a rhythmical pattern of moving toward one phenomenon while moving away from others as an act of deliberately choosing one while separating from another. Connecting with RRG may require separation from a sense of helplessness and powerlessness in relation to attitudes and behaviours about poverty and housing. One of the participant's words captured the essence of connecting-separating in that she said, "I used to be that person. Now I don't want to be no more, so I wait patiently. Believe me, it's hard." Mini spoke of how she once behaved and then reflected on how she would prefer to be. Mini deliberately moved away from former angry and impatient behaviour toward a more patient pattern of relating.

Woven throughout the concept of connecting are underlying themes of value, vision, and meaning that reinforce the concept. In connecting with RRG, participants emphasize the value they attribute to the organization and share a vision of possibilities, including safe and affordable housing, healthy communities, and a strong community organization. Having connected with RRG rather than with some other organization,

participants indicate by their voluntary presence in the group, that there is some meaning associated with it.

Struggling

Since the mission of RRG revolves around fighting for safe and affordable housing, it is understandable that struggling emerged as a core concept for the study participants. RRG provides mediation and advocacy to assist in addressing housing concerns for people with low income. Fighting slum landlords, injustice, and an unresponsive system was mentioned by most of the participants. Five people of Aboriginal ancestry spoke of facing social injustices, inequities, and racial discrimination. All participants were of low socioeconomic status and challenged in multiple ways. One participant, mobility-challenged and relying on a wheelchair and disability bus to provide transportation, found that accessing public buildings, restrooms, and other facilities was complicated by inadequate ramps, broken sidewalks, and weather conditions. Participants saw inadequate funding and lack of resources as obstacles, and made significant efforts to compensate for these deficits.

Struggling was graphically described by Ernie, who said, "I felt like, I've got this warrior outfit on and, I know there's consequences, but I'm not scared of them as I used to be . . ." Additionally, Ernie spoke of "trying to get a movement out of people" and "rallying for justice." Labonte (1994) considered this process to be one of "control" and development of "critical consciousness" (p. 260). Zachary (2000, p. 75) alluded to struggling when he spoke of "power sharing."

A number of the participants spoke either directly of, or alluded to, conflicts within RRG. One said, "For a while there, I thought we were going to disintegrate";

another said, "you struggle with the group and go through its ups and downs", and "everybody goes behind everybody else's back." Freire (1974) identified this aspect of lateral violence as being common among oppressed people who are afraid to lash out at the oppressor, and instead aim at less threatening targets.

Struggling with oneself was an important aspect of RRG association, as members sought to overcome their fears and gain confidence. One said, "Before, I used to be scared to answer"; another spoke of "breaking out of his shell", and others spoke of struggling against the negative behaviours and attitudes of others. Dickson (2000) called this process "cleansing and healing" (p. 195).

Underlying the concept of struggling are themes of value, vision, and meaning, which are helpful in overcoming obstacles and persisting through the various conflicts that arise consequent to RRG membership. As one participant stated, "It's a very long continual learning process." This statement indicates that value, meaning, and vision are associated with the group, since membership is voluntary and this member could have left the group in order to avoid struggles. The fact that this member views the conflicts and struggles as learning experiences highlights the value and meaning that is inherent in struggling.

Contributing

Contributing gives a sense of meaning and value to what one has and is doing, since others seek out available help and resources and are benefited. For marginalized people who cannot afford to participate in many of the dominant society's valued activities, being affiliated with RRG and having a vehicle to fight poverty and injustice provides an enhanced sense of meaning and purpose. According to Frankl (1959), a

psychiatrist and survivor of the death camps during World War II, a sense of meaning, which he termed logotherapy, is essential for overcoming the existential vacuum of meaninglessness that manifests as addiction, depression, and violence. Frankl noted that a major societal problem has resulted since people have lost touch with their spirit in their pursuit of values that force them to perform meaningless tasks, dulling their intuition and consciences. Logotherapy systematically "taps into the resources of the human spirit to move persons in pain toward meaning" (Frankl, 1986, p. 129).

Contributing was inherent in participant statements about helping people who are in need, sharing resources and knowledge, being a benefit to others, making a difference, and "doing what we can to help the oppressed and the poor." What I termed contributing, Dickson (2000) called "external exposure and engagement" (p. 196) and Labonte (1994, p. 260) identified as "capacity". The concept of contributing is particularly revealing of the importance participants ascribed to value, vision, and meaning. Through the process of sharing and helping others, participants demonstrate that the organization has value in addressing housing concerns and that it is meaningful to be a part of such a group. Each of the participants shared a vision of possibilities in terms of growth, importance, and scope. One participant spoke of a global vision and name, another said, "It will go places if we get decent funding", others said, "It's going to be good". All shared hope for a future and for the group's prospects.

Changing

The last core concept, changing, encompasses the prospect of incorporating future possibilities with present realities. In relation to what I termed changing, Dickson referred to "cleansing and healing" (pp. 195-196); Labonte identified as "coherence" (p.

260). Barrett, 1983 (as cited by Wall, 2000, p. 235), alluded to changing when she spoke of “awareness, choices”, and knowing participation in change.

Changes in life patterns emerged as participants encountered knowledge and experiences that challenged their beliefs. Participants spoke of being "not afraid of landlords", of "being educated on how to look for things", "breaking out of my shell", and of "seeing multi-dimensionally". One spoke of "standing tall" and of gaining skills and perspectives hitherto unknown. Many spoke of not being afraid to speak up, and of having gained a voice. One participant spoke of having a sense of pride and entitlement, "We deserve this. We've worked for it." Similarly, Barrett, 1983 (as cited by Wall, 2000, p. 235), spoke of power in relation to "knowing participation in change" as characterized by "choices, freedom to act intentionally, and involvement in creating change."

Most of the participants spoke of having acquired an awareness that had not existed prior to their involvement with RRG. One said, "I used to be that person. Now I don't want to be no more." Another participant spoke of "feeling like I'm making a difference."

The concept of changing is permeated with possibilities, including vision, value, and meaning. According to Parse (1998, p. 29), "Meaning refers to the linguistic and imagined content of something and the interpretation that one gives to something." Meaning is not static, but ever changing and shifting, subject to the man-universe interconnection and associated choices. "Meaning surfaces as reality is made concrete through a person's choices" (Toben, 1975, as cited by Parse, 1998, p. 35). Vision, or what Parse terms "imaging" is a process of reflective awareness and imagining that humans, as questioning beings engage in which helps shape choices and emerging

possibilities. Valuing is a key aspect of changing in that changes are generally made in the direction of what is valued. Hence, valuing is an integral part of changing.

In the Human Becoming Theory (Parse, 1981, 1992), the conceptual interpretation of the core concept changing is originating, or developing new ways of being and of living. Participants reflected on their previous ways of being and distinctively transformed their lives by the valued choices they made. In this research, originating was expressed by participants in the choices they made to live new, unique ways as they viewed the possibilities that will be in the light of their membership in RRG.

How one views the world, or one's sense of coherence, is an important aspect of changing life patterns. Antonovsky (1980) devised a sense of coherence scale based on his Salutogenic Model that can be used to evaluate health/disease on a continuum. His scale considers coping mechanisms, or buffers/moderators, rather than merely focusing on the traditional medical model with its pathogenic orientation. He identified "generalized resistance resources" (1980, p. 725) such as wealth, ego strength, cultural stability, and social support as promoting health. He also proposed that, although life experiences that are characterized by consistency, participation in tailoring outcome, and an underload-overload balance of stimuli, are crucial for shaping coherence, there is also a need for some unpredictable experiences. Some frustration and punishment appears to be vital in shaping how one views the world or one's sense of coherence.

General Discussion

In my previous involvement with RRG, I had considered the group as a whole, rather than examining experiences on an individual level. In this study, individual

participants earnestly sought to examine their lives in light of RRG involvement. Each participant took power and put it into motion to varying degrees and in varying directions. While the four core concepts were evident in each transcript, the emphasis on and value attributed to individual concepts by the participants varied. Annie and Mini stressed the importance of connecting and contributing. Sam and Hari placed an emphasis on changing. Bert emphasized connecting. The two participants with the longest experience with RRG, Pxx and Ernie, put a particular emphasis on contributing, with Ernie also stressing struggling. Being part of a community building group for seven years may serve as part of a feedback loop where contributing reinforces the value, meaning, and vision of the group, which leads to further contributing. There may be an association between length and degree of involvement in RRG and the perception of the value and importance of the core concepts, particularly in relation to struggling and contributing.

It is also possible that the internal RRG conflicts disproportionately impacted the weight attributed to struggling. All participants either spoke directly of, or alluded to group conflicts that existed during data collection. What was singular about the dialogue concerning these conflicts was that the participants were able to attribute positive value, at least in terms of learning, to these disputes. One participant expressed this attitude by saying, "That was a learning experience too." Out of internal conflict participants viewed their struggles as good learning experiences, and I saw empowerment in their stories. Perhaps this positive viewpoint is a reflection of their creativity, flexibility, and originality in the face of constant struggles associated with poverty. Green and participants of "We Did It Together" (2001, p. 37) indicated that "surviving in poverty

requires a lot of creativity, resourcefulness, and hard work", and that challenges are daily fare for parents in poverty. Similarly, Fullan (2001) indicated that both support and pressure are important elements for change and innovation. Marris (1975) emphasized that real and lasting change is associated with loss, anxiety, and struggle and involves "passing through zones of uncertainty" (p. 166). Fullan also spoke of learning as being "meaning-making", in that people are more influenced by something that has meaning for them. Since fighting poverty and advocating for safe and affordable housing has meaning and relevance for the members, RRG addresses a pertinent issue and provides a means for channelling power and energy in a positive direction. Marginalization, social injustices, and inequities undermine self-esteem and limit opportunities. RRG provides a vehicle for fighting these social injustices.

All of the participants experienced and activated power to some degree. Whether the power was dormant within them, a product of synergy within the group, or received from outside the organization as well, is unclear. What is relevant, however, is that each of the participants, to some degree or other, voluntarily located and harnessed power and put the power into action toward achieving goals, dreams, and possibilities. The participants spoke of barriers to empowerment and membership in RRG: inadequate funding, internal conflicts, lack of support, fears, discrimination, prejudice, inequities and inequalities, accessibility and availability of services, inadequate education and training, and injustice. They also spoke of empowerment facilitation: provision of an office and physical space for RRG, help and support by clinic, financial support, funds for transportation, childcare, and snacks, community recognition, coalitions, collaboration, community support, being heard, being respected. Many of the barriers

that RRG participants mentioned are amenable to strategic interventions. All of the empowerment facilitators can also be initiated through strategic interventions.

Limitations of this Study

There were a number of limitations associated with the present study. The study participants were not representative of the general membership of RRG in that 80% of RRG members are females of Aboriginal ancestry compared with 29% in the study. Among the RRG general membership, 20% are males compared with 57% of the study participants, the majority of whom were males of Aboriginal ancestry. The higher male Aboriginal participation in the study may have influenced the findings. There may have been cultural or other factors associated with the disproportionately high number of male participation in this study. However, despite the disparity between the study group and RRG members in terms of group composition, the participants, as well as the general membership of RRG experienced marginalization.

The seven study participants all related positive experiences as members of RRG. Despite my attempt to invite participation by two members of RRG who voiced negative concerns during the general meeting in January, 2002, those potential participants declined my request to take part in the research. Those people as well as others who have dropped out, not wanting to commit time and resources, or who were discouraged for other reasons may hold some important information concerning the lived experience of being members of RRG. Former RRG members who left because they were asked to leave or who left due to anger, may have been able to shed some light on factors that contribute to non-retention of members. Finally, there may be individuals who have gone on to higher education, employment, or other careers, as a

result of their association with RRG; these people may have important information concerning moving on to higher levels of empowerment. Thus there may be additional enlightenment about the process of empowerment that was not evident through the experiences of the study participants.

The audiotaped interviews were conducted in the participants' homes, thereby possibly altering the way informants communicated with the researcher, since distractions and disruptions may have interfered with the dialogues and discussions. Phone calls, visitors, and household demands intruded on these interviews in a few instances. As well, dialogical engagement was impeded by deliberately avoiding questions involving the specific use of the word "empowerment." This indirect method was necessary in order to obtain data without suggesting that empowerment had occurred. I centred questions around membership in RRG so that I could determine if there had been either a positive or negative change in power on the individual level. In relation to the organization itself, RRG was undergoing internal changes and conflicts throughout the course of this study, which may have hampered communication and relationships.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS, REFLECTIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

Conclusions

From the structure of the lived experience of being members of RRG, as experienced by the participants in this study, there is evidence to support the conclusion that empowerment was occurring. The participants are on journeys of empowerment as they connect, struggle, contribute, and change. The lived experience of empowerment is a process or journey, for which RRG is a vehicle. Although there are many possible vehicles available, RRG provides an affordable vehicle for empowerment and for doing something meaningful about some of the existing social injustices, particularly in relation to safe and affordable housing. Since a bicycle is propelled by an individual's own energy and power, there is a controllable aspect inherent in this mode of transportation that would not be as apparent in a motorized vehicle. For people who have been oppressed, a sense of control is necessary. History demonstrates that oppressed people have often subscribed to or been forced to take part in programs and policies that have further oppressed and alienated them; for example, residential schools for Aboriginal people.

Using the metaphor of learning to ride a bicycle, a member first connects with the bicycle, struggles to learn how to balance and maneuver it, changes as muscles and skills are developed, and finally, contributes as the vehicle is put into active usage, delivering articles and affording a more efficient form of transportation than previously

existed. In connecting with RRG people have access to a mode of transportation that is faster and more efficient than walking. There is a struggle in learning the art of riding and energy is required to pedal, steer, and balance the bike. Through various changes that occur enroute, while learning to ride the bike, new skills and muscles are developed, as well as greater expertise in navigating the vehicle. Finally, new opportunities and possibilities arise once the basic mechanics of bike riding are mastered, and the conveyance affords faster transportation and greater carriage capacity and facility than previously existed. RRG provides an available and practical vehicle for marginalized people, providing an identity, a strong voice, relationships, solidarity, and a potential change vector.

In light of the research findings, my original view of empowerment has been expanded. I understood “power” to be energy in motion, and empowerment as “taking the power and putting it into motion.” I see that there is a need to struggle and forcefully and deliberately seize a position or power that has been denied. The journey of empowerment is a process of connecting with the power, harnessing it, and channelling it into service. Along the way, change occurs, possibly in conjunction with reflection and illumination as possibilities are perceived and realized, thereby unlocking further possibilities. The journey of empowerment may not always be a smooth and forward operation for each participant, but rather an individual trip with considerable self-discovery as choices are made and possibilities explored.

I now see that empowerment is also about “standing tall”, struggling, building capacity, and applying the realized power to other areas of life. The journey of empowerment is fraught with obstacles and challenges, each of which provides an

opportunity to learn and build muscles and gain experience. Internal conflicts may be regarded as reservoirs of energy, potential for change, that can be harnessed and employed, to work on behalf of the group in building a stronger community, or they can be negatively deployed to the detriment of the group.

Empowerment is about power, which consists of various and variable energies. Energy may be directed in a desired direction at the choice of the individual having access to it. This concept of energy fits well with Parse's Human Becoming Theory since the universe is regarded as a whole in dynamic and inseparable relationship with human and environmental energy fields. One study participant, indicating that she now knows how to deal effectively with landlords rather than shouting and engaging in destructive behaviours, has deliberately chosen to rise above her past behaviour, thereby improving her relationships and outcomes. The human-universe mutual process was deliberately changed by the participant's altered behaviour and responses, creating a new rhythmical pattern of relating with a more positive tone.

There is a link between active membership in RRG and empowerment in the study's participants. RRG has been an appropriate avenue and vehicle for the facilitation of empowerment. There are some important principles underlying the structure of RRG that are intended to promote empowerment. One of the early names of the organization was Renters' Rights and Advocates Group, and the group's banner stated its intent as being community building. This focus on community development with its underlying principles of community involvement, community identification of issues, collective action, focus on community members' skills and strengths, and holistic view of health, poverty, and housing have contributed to community and individual empowerment. One

of the goals of RRG's partnership with the clinic is to "promote, encourage, and support personal and group empowerment and self determination for healthier community living" (Willson, 1995). This emphasis on empowerment may distinguish RRG from other groups.

Reflections

There is danger in dissecting the individual aspects of empowerment, as has been done in this study, since the parts may fail to capture the whole as a unitarian concept, which is only fully operative in its dynamic and synergistic holism. There may be a mystery, a spark, that ignites at junctions and unions of the four core concepts as they interact in the process of empowerment. The very methodology that was designed to illuminate the phenomenon, may instead serve to obfuscate. Then, having analyzed, dissected, synthesized, and reconstructed, the critical and essential spark or energy that activates the power may have been extinguished.

While connecting, struggling, contributing, and changing are important to empowerment, perhaps what Hustedde (1998, p. 155) termed the "soul of community" is actually the key element of real empowerment. Threaded throughout this study are underlying themes of value, vision, and meaning, which together may contribute to or constitute what Hustedde identified as the "soul of community". Hustedde's identification of a community's soul may be the dynamic force that breathes life into communities.

While each concept may be examined individually, as may each theme, perhaps Parse's HBT comes closest to considering the holistic aspect of the unitary man-universe relationship, which exists in mutual process. If a community were merely an

organization or "an association or society of people working together to some end" (New Webster's Dictionary and Thesaurus, 1992, p. 707)), or "the way in which something is organized", it would lend itself more readily to analysis of its individual components. However, community is an organism, or a living entity "adapted for living by means of organs separate in function but dependent on one another" (NWDT, p. 707). If community indeed is an organism with a soul, traditional methods of community development may fail to nurture the dynamic essence or soul of the group.

Hustedde asked (p. 155), "How can we sustain communities if we focus only on intellectual knowledge, capacity building, skills development, and meeting basic needs without the soul?" Since RRG is a community building organization, this element of "soul" may be a form of self-healing, and blessing in the direction of wholeness. Dickson (2000, p. 195) spoke of the elements of "cleansing and healing", and these elements seem related to what Hustedde called "the blessings of affirmation in which we tell community people in words and touch the importance of the journey they are on" (p. 163).

According to Labonte (1994) and Roberts (1983), mere token appeasement of marginalized people is a cruel mockery and makes a sham of the peoples' real needs. It is not enough to merely speak of empowerment, while denying people real finances, power, resources, and control. From my own experiences along the journey of empowerment, I can attest that support and opportunities with financial and other resources, without the creation of dependence and obligation, helped me travel safely and smoothly. The relationships and friendships that provided social support were most valuable as they offered listening ears, understanding hearts, and allowed me to draw up

my own itinerary, validating my strengths and beliefs. As I achieved tiny forward steps, I gained confidence to take larger steps and developed a history of achievement, which superimposed its face on my formerly bleak background, and unlocked a world of possibilities. Had I been given token appeasement, it would have been of little benefit in the long term. However, since I was given finances, opportunities, resources, and social supports of various kinds, I took advantage of those opportunities and persevered through the challenges, growing in the process. For me, drawing on all the proffered supports and services afforded a way out of the marginalization that had plagued my history.

Much has been said in the literature concerning empowerment, yet much has been left unsaid that should be afforded some mention. Who makes the assumption that empowerment is necessarily a positive phenomenon and cannot be negatively deployed? History affords many examples of the misuse of power. During World War II, Nazis were empowered, and they perpetrated some heinous crimes on those they considered undesirable. In the September 11, 2001 terrorist assault, the terrorists took power by overpowering pilots and flight attendants.

Can a person be too empowered? Since power or energy is neutral, it is the misapplication of power that results in deleterious effects. There is a need to use power wisely and to channel it. All of the study participants spoke of or alluded to conflicts, and one said, "for a while there, I thought we were going to disintegrate" [due to internal conflicts].

The journey of empowerment is a process that requires time, if the journey is to be deeply and meaningfully experienced. A greater depth, detail, and richness of data

was found in the transcripts of participants with longer periods of membership in RRG. The length of time and degree of involvement with RRG were positively associated with the richness of transcript data from the dialogical engagements.

In reflecting on Parse's theory and methodology, I concluded that while her methodology allows for a thorough exploration of the data and a comprehensive analysis, it was complex and difficult to understand and apply. I believe that there is a need to simplify Parse's research methodology in order to make it more readily usable by others. Edwards (2000) criticized Parse's theory and methodology, in that Parse does not clearly define disease or ill health, and that quality of life, which Parse maintains is determined solely by the individual, may not necessarily coincide with the view of concerned health professionals. Since a person judges that quality of life is sound, there is then no for health intervention or ethical considerations. Edwards also maintains that not all lived experiences are universal. Finally, Edwards claims that Parse's descriptions of lived experiences and HBT are shrouded by complex terminology.

Implications for Practice, Education, and Research

Participants in my study indicated that they did not feel heard, valued, or respected by society. Fear and lack of confidence were common to participants. RRG members spoke of discrimination, prejudice, injustice, exploitation, stereotyping, and insensitive social institutions, and unequal opportunities.

Implications for Practice

There is an urgent need for the voices of marginalized people to be both heard and strengthened. This is not mere tokenism, but an active participation in hearing, respecting, and heeding those voices. Only too often, people are treated as objects to be

acted on, rather than as thinking, feeling, changing humans who are authors of their own creation and destiny. The traditional approach serves to further estrange marginalized people from the dominant system in that the perspectives, desires, and values of persons are not respected by the health care system. Instead, an institutional standard is used as a basis of comparison for all persons, regardless of their culture, religion, values, and wishes. Non-compliance with this arbitrary standard and its directives is considered to be contrary to health, as perceived by the institution, while compliance is equated with promoting health. There is little consideration given to the context of the person's life, wishes, or interpretation of health. The traditional model is not respectful of the individual, but instead values conformity to institutional requirements as being necessary for what it perceives as health.

After having developed a sense of self-awareness regarding their own attitudes, behaviours, and personal nursing styles, nurses can then begin to truly learn to listen, hear, and respect people. Parse's video, "The Human Becoming Theory: Living True Presence in Practice" (International Consortium of Parse Scholars, n.d.) could be shown at in-services and workshops to help nurses learn how to interact with clients. Through the learning and incorporation of true presence, nurses can develop more respectful attitudes and behaviours that value clients along their life journeys. It would be helpful to have a Master's prepared nurse, well versed in HBT at each healthcare site as a clinical nurse specialist and staff educator. Continuing education utilizing HBT would help nurses change their perspectives and worldviews so that they can more effectively work in the global community.

As agents of change, nurses can act as advocates, influencing socio-political changes on behalf of marginalized people and ensuring that the voices of the people are heard. Nurses can engage in intersectoral collaboration to help bridge the gaps between people, needs, and services. Nurses can become politically active and vocal on behalf of the marginalized and oppressed, working in partnership with them to help address the issues of poverty, injustice, and discrimination. There is a need to ensure that multiculturalism and cultural diversity are respected and considered in relation to nursing. Recognition that the worldviews and values of others may differ from typical Western values, such as democracy, capitalism, materialism, independence, and community will help foster acceptance and respect for those of culturally diverse backgrounds.

Practical ways to bring about these changes include developing awareness of existent practises and hearing the voices and stories of the lived experience of persons experiencing oppression, marginalization, and injustice. Through inservices and interactive workshops, guest speakers from marginalized groups could be invited to come and tell their stories, share their experiences, and relate the associated feelings that attend the experience of being marginalized. In interactive workshops, after viewing Parse's video, nurses could role play the parts of oppressor and oppressed in various simulated situations. Through the use of creative imagination, nurses can gain an understanding of the feelings and experiences of another, thereby changing existent values and perspectives.

The journey of empowerment is a process that requires time, if the journey is to be deeply and meaningfully experienced. Those working with community groups need

to provide time for relationships to grow and to align their expectations, and that of funders, with long term time frames, such as two or more years, for groups to develop significantly.

Those individuals working with marginalized people would benefit from considering the four core concepts of empowerment and encouraging them in all relationships. Support and community relationships are important for *connecting*. It is important to provide physical space, resources, funding, and adequate time to facilitate the process of *connecting*.

Regarding *struggling*, timely and supportive interventions, such as mediation and facilitation by skilled and seasoned community development workers and community health nurses, will help foster growth and direct energy into positive channels rather than toward the destruction of self and others. *Struggling* should not be viewed negatively, but as a catalyst for change and growth. With this positive attitude, it is more likely that opportunities will be noticed and appropriated. Opportunities for change and redirection may be present in the struggles. Skilled mediators and facilitators can act as a sounding board, providing reflection and neutral input that helps channel the energy into mission oriented activities, such as fighting poverty, rather than internally attacking group members. By providing knowledge and different perspectives, skilled group facilitators can help members manage conflict and focus on goals and objectives.

For people to *contribute*, it is important for them to be able to give and help others and thereby come to value themselves and others. Without being involved in contributing, there is a fostering of dependence and worthlessness that undermines empowerment. Through contributing, people ascribe value to knowledge and

experience, which they in turn impart to others. There needs to be an outlet or channel for group members to direct their efforts toward. For marginalized people, the outlet must be relevant to their lives since their resources are limited. Nurses and other health professionals working with marginalized populations need to recognize that financial resources are required for enabling group members to attend meetings and activities. Funding for transportation, childcare, and snacks needs to be supplied by the parent organization or partner. Physical space and office supplies and resources are necessary to the group's work and need to be supplied by the parent organization. Without financial help and sharing of resources, marginalized people have little opportunity and ability to participate in the community group. Financial support may include helping the community group apply for available grants and government funds. Since most groups comprising marginalized people have few skills in the writing of funding proposals, help and support are required to facilitate the process. Nurses and other healthcare professionals can help community groups become aware of available funding and assist in the process of writing funding proposals to various agencies.

In relation to *changing*, it is helpful for people to have an opportunity to tell their stories and in the telling to reflect and be illuminated, unlocking further possibilities. Since it takes almost two years for group members to self identify with the group, it is necessary to allow time for trust and inter-group connections to occur. Through social activities, shared laughs and stories, members have opportunity to connect. During circle meetings, where each member checks in and shares a piece of their life, opportunity is given for each member to speak. These periods of self-disclosure can be utilized by members to reflect on their experiences. Furthermore, building in an

evaluation process at each meeting would help the group members share their perceptions regarding the group's position in relation to the group's mission. This evaluative process can help the group maintain its focus and gives a readout on the group's present position in relation to its mission. A simple evaluative tool, such as a poster with varying weather positions, such as sunny, fair, rainy, thunderstorm, and snow can be used to illustrate the group's present temperature and to help the group address current issues while maintaining focus on the mission.

While these four core concepts were identified as important to empowerment among this group of participants, each person and group was unique, responded uniquely, and needed to be listened to and heard. Through the use of true presence, a strategy and way of being, nurses and other professionals can more effectively interact with marginalized people, respecting and facilitating their individual life journeys, rather than being judgmental in their relationships. Seminars and in-services can incorporate Parse's video on human becoming and the use of true presence. By watching the video, nurses can develop skills and understanding in how to incorporate Parse's methodology in their practice. Workshops using role-playing of various lived experiences, such as joy, sorrow, and hope, would help nurses more effectively and respectfully care for their clients.

Underlying and permeating the four major concepts are themes of value, vision, and meaning, which cannot be overlooked. Newly formed groups may require considerable time to develop these elements. Although connecting, contributing, struggling, and changing are all important, individuals may place differing emphases on these elements. New members require considerable time to self-identify with a group

and may exhibit lesser degrees of the core concepts than those who have been with the group for several years.

Implications for Nursing Education

Nursing educators need to be reminded that emancipation is a consequence of education. There is a need to ensure that curricula components foster emancipation and critical thinking. Rather than maintaining the status quo, educators need to ensure that emancipation is facilitated through critical consciousness-raising regarding underlying contributors to disease.

There is a need for nursing curricula to adopt the simultaneity paradigm and to abandon the totality paradigm. Nursing is a human science and as such must use processes that best enhance and reflect its basis in humanism. The traditional approach, using the medical model, fails to consider humans as subjects and authors of their own existence, but treats them as objects to be acted upon. Baccalaureate nursing education should facilitate understanding humans in the context of their lives, as living, changing, creative beings. If such a broad based theory as Parse's Human Becoming Theory were used in early parts of the curricula, nursing students will be challenged to broaden their thinking and attitudes, helping them to better nurse in the global community. By expanding students' consciousness in early stages of the nursing curriculum, students will be more adapted to and in synchrony with the ever-changing universe.

Screening techniques for admission to nursing education programs should be developed, so that academic achievement is not the sole consideration for admission. While academic abilities are important to nursing, personal suitability in terms of caring

and compassion also have significance. Personality profiling or some instrument that measures characteristics such as compassion, would prove beneficial to the profession.

The use of true presence as outlined by Parse, may be of benefit in educating nurses, since it provides a means of conveying attention and caring. The utilization of Parse's instructional video and its accompanying learning guide (International Consortium of Parse Scholars, n.d.) would help prepare students to more effectively respond to clients. Baccalaureate nursing curricula that is founded on Parse's philosophy and guidelines is congruent with the provision of safe, compassionate nursing care. It would be helpful to refer to Parse's educational suggestions relating to various aspects of nursing education (Parse, 1998, pp. 76-94).

Nursing educators could incorporate arts and humanities in curricula, because they have a humanizing effect and stimulate both creativity and imagination, thereby broadening a person's perspectives on their situation. There is a need for a shift to curricula that enhance liberating and innovative styles of learning with their associated dialogical and illuminative discussions.

In order to better foster multicultural understanding and recognition and acceptance of cultural diversity, baccalaureate nursing students, during the course of their practicums, should be immersed in a community experiencing marginalization. This exposure to values, beliefs, and cultures that may be different from their own, will help challenge existing beliefs and presuppositions.

Implications for Research

Further qualitative research needs to be done concerning the four core concepts. To better understand the components of empowerment, each of the four core concepts

should be explored individually, so that a more thorough understanding of the phenomena of connecting, struggling, contributing, and changing may result. The research should include a range of grassroots organizations and community building groups. If a larger number of participants were included in each study, the results could be richer, particularly in the case of those reporting negative experiences.

This research revealed the structure of the lived experience of empowerment as experienced by members of RRG who participated in this study. However, it would be important, in terms of the findings related to the study, to determine the reasons for people having withdrawn from membership and involvement with RRG. Did these people experience a different internalization of the four core concepts? Did those who leave the organization do so because they felt adequately empowered? If those questions were answered, there would be greater understanding of the process of facilitating empowerment. Further research should seek to include individuals who are no longer associated with such a group as RRG and to ascertain the individuals' reasons for dissociating from the group.

Subsequent research with different populations is needed to expand understanding of the core concepts. Further qualitative research regarding the phenomenon of empowerment among marginalized members of a community group focused on fighting poverty or injustice could afford a more comprehensive view of the individual core concepts.

Quantitative studies using such instruments as the Barrett Power as Knowing Participation in Change Tool (Barrett, 1990, p. 109) for initial appraisal of clients in terms of power, followed by the utilization of "health patterning" interventions in which

clients knowingly participate in life changes could be done to measure changes in power. After the mutual patterning intervention, the Barrett instrument could again be utilized in evaluating the changes effected by health patterning intervention.

Further Reflections and Musings

In summary, after mining the many rich opportunities that life has afforded me and that I have seized, I journey into the future as a seasoned traveller and selector of options. I will be journeying to empowerment, but never arriving there, since for me, empowerment is not a destination, but a life long process. Dwelling with human becoming, empowerment, and the emergent core concepts of connecting, struggling, contributing, and changing, I wrote the following lines:

We were like dead men walking

When we lost our power songs.

It wasn't long before we lost our voices too-

No longer were songs heard in the night.

The hearts of the people lay cracked and broken.

Our hope was gone and the buffalo did not come.

Yet, today, we have found new ways of being

Though our drums long lay silent and forgotten.

And now we have new life breathed in our nostrils

And have found our power songs somehow-

So the buffalo may hear us and come home again.

Empowerment, as a lived experience for these participants of RRG, was a unique experience in which each participant made the journey in an interconnecting and

simultaneous process by intentionally continuing with connecting, struggling, and contributing, as lives were changed and transformed from the now to the not-yet. In the metaphor of the above poem, losing our power songs is synonymous with disempowerment and is an aspect of marginalization. There is a need to locate and revive the power that lies dormant within. Through finding new ways of being, the power songs return. In the structure of the lived experience of empowerment among members of RRG, connecting, struggling, contributing, and changing were processes that helped to forge new ways of being.

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APPENDIX A

[ORIGINAL] CONSENT TO BE A RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

Consent to be a Research Participant

Study: Exploring the Lived Experience of Empowerment as experienced by Members of Renters' Rights Group

I agree to participate in a study entitled Exploring the Lived Experience of Empowerment as experienced by Members of Renters' Rights Group conducted by Lily Kampman. Lily is a master of nursing student from the College of Nursing at the University of Saskatchewan. The purpose of the study is to explore the concept of empowerment as experienced by members of the Renters' Rights Group to help nurses better understand how to effectively work in health promotion. One to two visits will be conducted at a time and place convenient to the participant.

I understand that I will be talking with Lily Kampman for approximately 30 to 60 minutes during the first visit, depending on what I want to share. The second visit will be approximately 20 to 40 minutes. This discussion will be tape recorded and made into a transcript and all written transcripts, tapes, and materials will be kept in a locked cabinet in Lily Kampman's home. A code name will be used instead of my real name. I understand that the data from this study will be kept secure by Lily's supervisor, and, after a period of five years, will be destroyed. I also understand that the results will be used in Lily's thesis, seminar, and in a published article, possibly coauthored with her supervisor.

I understand that I am free to not answer any question. Also, I am free to withdraw from this study at any time without any personal obligations or consequences. If I feel uncomfortable during the discussion, I have the option to stop and withdraw from the study, stop and reschedule with Lily Kampman, or stop, rest, and then continue. I may also ask for referral to support services.

I understand that I may call Ms. Kampman at (306) 975-0468 at any time prior to or after our discussion to talk about any concerns or questions regarding my participation. I freely and voluntarily consent to participate in this research study and have had all my questions satisfactorily answered. I will be given a copy of this consent form. A copy will also be given to Lily's supervisor and to The Office of Research Services, University of Saskatchewan.

Signature of Participant

Date

Signature of Researcher

Date

APPENDIX B

**CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL: UNIVERSITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON
ETHICS IN BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE RESEARCH**



**UNIVERSITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
ON ETHICS IN BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE RESEARCH**

NAME: Yvonne Brown (L. Kampman)
College of Nursing

BSC#: 2001-179

DATE: October 22, 2001

The University Advisory Committee on Ethics in Behavioural Science Research has reviewed the Application for Ethics Approval for your study "Exploring the Lived Experience of Empowerment as Experienced by Members of Renters' Rights Group" (01-179).

Your study has been APPROVED subject to the following minor modifications:

- Please modify your consent form to include a description of the process whereby the transcripts will be validated.

Please send one copy of your revisions to the Office of Research Services for our records. Please highlight or underline any changes made when resubmitting.

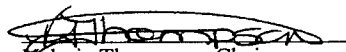
The term of this approval is for 5 years.

This letter serves as your certificate of approval, effective as of the time that you have completed the requested modifications. If you require a letter of unconditional approval, please so indicate on your reply, and one will be issued to you.

Any significant changes to your proposed study should be reported to the Chair for Committee consideration in advance of its implementation.

In order to maintain ethics approval, a status report must be submitted to the Chair for Committee consideration within one month of the current expiry date each year the study remains open, and upon study completion. Please refer to the following website for further instructions: <http://www.usask.ca/research/ethics.shtml>.

I wish you a successful and informative study.


Valerie Thompson, Chair
University Advisory Committee
on Ethics in Behavioural Science Research

VT/bk

Office of Research Services, University of Saskatchewan
Kirk Hall Room 210, 117 Science Place, Saskatoon SK S7N 5C8 CANADA
Telephone: (306) 966-8576 or (306) 966-2084 Facsimile: (306) 966-8597 <http://www.usask.ca/research/>

APPENDIX C

[REVISED] CONSENT TO BE A RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

Consent to be a Research Participant

Study: Exploring the Lived Experience of Empowerment as experienced by Members of Renters' Rights Group

I agree to participate in a study entitled *Exploring the Lived Experience of Empowerment as experienced by Members of Renters' Rights Group* conducted by Lily Kampman. Lily is a master of nursing student from the College of Nursing at the University of Saskatchewan. The purpose of the study is to explore the concept of empowerment as experienced by members of the Renters' Rights Group to help nurses better understand how to effectively work in health promotion. One to two visits will be conducted at a time and place convenient to me.

I understand that I will be talking with Lily Kampman for approximately 30 to 60 minutes during the first visit, depending on what I want to share. The second visit will be approximately 20 to 40 minutes. This discussion will be tape recorded and made into a transcript. All transcripts, tapes, and materials will be kept in a locked cabinet in Lily Kampman's home. A code name will be used instead of my real name. I understand that the data from this study will be kept secure by Lily's supervisor, and, after a period of five years, will be destroyed. I also understand that the results will be used in Lily's thesis, seminar, and in a published article, possibly coauthored with her supervisor.

I understand that I am free to not answer any question, and that I am free to withdraw from this study at any time without any personal obligations or consequences. If I feel uncomfortable during the discussion, I have the option to stop and withdraw from the study, stop and re-schedule with Lily Kampman, or stop, rest, and then continue. I may also ask for referral to support services.

I will be given an opportunity to review the typed transcript of the interview. At this time I can change or withdraw the information if I do not agree with what has been written. If I agree with the transcript, I will be asked to sign a transcript release form.

I understand that I may call Ms. Kampman at (306) 975-0468 at any time prior to or after our discussion to talk about any concerns or questions regarding my participation. I may also contact Ms. Kampman's research supervisor, Professor Yvonne Brown, (306) 966-6248. I freely and voluntarily consent to participate in this research study and have had all my questions satisfactorily answered. I will be given a copy of this consent form.

If I have any questions about my rights as a participant, I understand that I can telephone the Office of Research Services, University of Saskatchewan, (306) 966-4053.

This research project proposal was reviewed and approved on ethical grounds by the University of Saskatchewan advisory Committee on Ethics in Behavioral Research on (date).

Signature of Participant

Date

Signature of Researcher

Date

APPENDIX D
DEMOGRAPHIC SHEET

Demographic Sheet

Age: _____

Sex: _____

Aboriginal: _____ Non-Aboriginal: _____

Education: _____

Occupation: _____

Employment Status: full-time _____

permanent part-time _____

casual _____

temporary _____

unemployed _____

other _____

Marital Status: _____

Number of children living at home _____

Family income level: less than \$10,000 _____

\$10,000 to \$29,000 _____

\$30,000 to \$49,000 _____

more than \$50,000 _____

Years living in neighbourhood: _____

Length of time involved with Renters' Rights Group: _____

APPENDIX E

PROPOSED DIALOGICAL ENGAGEMENT QUESTIONS AND PROMPTS

Proposed Dialogical Engagement Questions and Prompts

(used as appropriate and as needed)

1. How did you get involved with RRG?
2. Were there concerns you had before you became a member of RRG? Such as?
3. Are there benefits you get from being a member? What?
4. What has been helpful about RRG?
5. What has not been helpful at RRG?
6. Were there personal changes that resulted from your membership with RRG?
7. What were they?
8. Are there differences in how you feel about yourself?
9. What suggestions would you make to improve your experience with RRG?
10. What changes have you made in your life as a result of your experiences with RRG?
11. How has RRG affected your family and community?
12. Could you tell me more about that?
13. Please, go on.
14. Is there anything more you would like to say?
15. Any further suggestions?

APPENDIX F

FINAL CONSENT AND SIGN OFF SHEET

Final Consent and Sign Off Sheet

Study: An Exploration of Empowerment as it affects members of the Renters' Rights Group

As a result of my participation in a study entitled Empowerment: The Lived Experience of the Members of an Inner City Grassroots Tenants' Rights Organization conducted by Lily Kampman, a master of nursing student from the College of Nursing at the University of Saskatchewan, a transcript has been made from taped interviews.

I have been given the opportunity to read, or have read to me, a copy of the transcripts from the audiotaped recordings of the interviews in which I participated.

I agree with the accuracy of the transcript and have been given the opportunity to make deletions and/or additions to the transcript.

I agree to permit Ms. Kampman to use the transcripts as altered and read. The data from this study will be used in Lily's thesis, seminar, and possibly in a published article.

Signature of Participant

Date

Signature of Researcher

Date